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# Sight and Sound

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inside

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and the beauty  
of the beast**

**Advertising,  
art and the  
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**China: on the  
set with  
Zhang Yimou**



## A road of their own

**In Ridley Scott's 'Thelma and Louise' the road movie changes gear**



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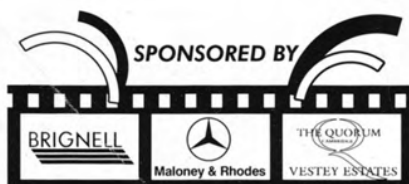


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# Old enemies

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Orthodoxy has it that there is a chasm between activities such as commercial art and fine art, commercials and features. And figures such as Ridley Scott (or the late Andy Warhol) who have worked in the commercials sector have never quite lost the stigma of their early affiliation.

It may be our familiarity with these oppositions that explains why British film critics have recently reached (yet again) for the word 'commercialism' to articulate their anxiety about the changes overtaking European cinema and the success of US films at the recent Cannes festival. The power of the US film industry to dominate the production, distribution and exhibition of films is a matter of real concern, as Peter Biskind's column shows. But horror at the power of multinational capital is not, it appears, the prime reason for the dislike of commercialism.

At one level the word simply incarnates a loathing of all things American, and in this form it doesn't need to be taken seriously. The success of Hollywood in Europe during the post-war period may be inseparable from US economic power, but it is no more to be reduced to it than the triumphant export of Abstract Expressionism to Europe – in the late 50s can be wholly explained by the support the CIA gave to the institutions that promoted such art. Hollywood says 'popular' and 'pleasure' at least as much as 'power' to the audiences of Europe, words which those who invest in art all too often find as embarrassing as commerce.

In its honorable form, the stand against commerce is in fact a stance in defence of the art film (i.e. non-commercial cinema), whose existence is threatened if large returns on investment are the sole or even primary criterion of judgment. And who would want to deny that there needs to be vocal support for institutions that can sustain projects as various as Rivette's *La Belle noiseuse*, discussed by Ian Christie in this issue, or Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies*.

Yet this is not helped by talking in terms of the old binary-ism, art film versus commercial film. After all, there is a certain irony in supporters of cinema making these distinctions when half a

century ago the foremost cultural critics in Britain loathed cinema as a threat to the art of literature and damned it as a 'low' form with close affinities to commerce and advertising.

But more importantly, the division reveals a chasm of historical ignorance. That a certain work wants to define itself, or is defined as, fine art or art cinema is no guarantee that it will continue to be valued as such. Nor is it the case that work we now value as art was necessarily so considered when it was first produced. These arguments are hardly new, but apparently have to be rehearsed again as the old clichés are revived and clutched like a comfort blanket.

Dumping 'art' and 'commercial' as categories would allow us to move towards seeing the various forms of film as a continuum which we would approach with no predetermined account of which form of film-making is most valuable. To do this may even allow us to recognise that many films, past and present, never respected these categories. Mike O'Pray's short piece in this issue points out that some of the most esteemed British films show a promiscuous disregard for such binary-ism. And Tim Kirby's and R. B. Kitaj's pieces suggest the current two-way traffic between high and low. We may even come to recognise that the engagement of contemporary film-makers with advertising – which now has its own genres, idioms and traditions – is producing interesting work. (After all, Joyce's *Ulysses* is born from a dialogue with the language of advertising, and no one has accused Joyce of corruption.)

The recognition of Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* (released here on 23 August) at Cannes, where it won a prize, may suggest that possibilities of change are there to be grasped. *Young Soul Rebels*, made by a black Briton, has no patience with binary-ism or purity and points towards a cinema made in Europe that no longer feels the need to choose in the old way between the US and Europe, between 'pleasure' and 'seriousness'.

Given the importance of the film, not least in terms of these debates, we mean to return to it in the next issue.

## JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan – Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry, this Hood guy steals from the rich and gives to the poor right. In my book that's a commie; see if we can cook up a script giving the Sheriff's point of view, and Jerry, just in case, get some background on that Alpine joker Bill Tell'.



# Look upon a star

Schadenfreude is hardly unknown in Hollywood, a place of envies and gargantuan resentments, but seldom does it find public expression; after all, the producer whose failure you gloat over today may take over your studio tomorrow. Every now and then, however, a movie comes along that everybody – well, everybody but the executives who okayed it – feels blissfully safe to hate out loud.

Bruce Willis' new picture *Hudson Hawk* is the latest example of the FED, the Film Everybody Despises. Long before it hit the cinemas, industry types were revelling in its anticipated doom, cackling at reports of disastrous preview screenings, and dubbing it *Howard the Hawk*, or, more Smollettishly, *Hudson Duck*.

In the years since *Heaven's Gate*, the FED has become a new, if unacknowledged, Hollywood genre, and like most movie genres it serves a valuable social function. *Howard the Duck*, *The Cotton Club*, *Ishtar*, *Days of Thunder* – such overpriced flops serve as occasions for public displays of virtue and fiscal probity. Executives who blithely spend \$45 million for a picture feel good about themselves when they moralise about the extravagance of those who spend \$65 million. And the pleasure is doubly sweet when they can fulminate against someone they actively fear and despise; Hollywood loves nothing more than a ready-made villain.

*Hudson Hawk* quickly established itself as a classic of the FED genre. Not only is it punitively bad ("Slurp my butt" passes for repartee), but it reportedly went \$20 million over budget amid rumours that animators were painting the film, frame by frame, to give the balding Willis more hair.

Better still, *Hudson Hawk* offered the delightful spectacle of two easy targets: Willis, who dreamt up the entire sorry project, and producer Joel Silver, whose *Commando*, *Predator*, *Lethal Weapon* and *Die Hard* have made him the king of the action picture (or 'no brainer', as it's affectionately called). Envied for his success and loathed for his Olympian vanity – Silver makes Kenneth Branagh look like Lucky Jim Dixon – he's replaced Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer as the producer most industry people want to see brought to his knees.

Although Willis engenders no comparable hostility, people have grown exceedingly weary of his motormouth and his conceit in thinking himself a

What makes a successful film, wonders John Powers, as he watches recent movies, including Bruce Willis' 'Hudson Hawk'



The man who fell to earth: Bruce Willis in 'Hudson Hawk'

superstar. Willis is merely another pseudo-star like Richard Gere, Richard Dreyfuss or Michael Douglas: he's been in some smash movies, but his name doesn't lure people into the cinemas. Indeed, since his heyday in *Moonlighting*, Willis has headlined a series of duds: *Blind Date*, *Sunset*, *In Country*, *Bonfire of the Vanities*, *Mortal Thoughts*. His only hits have been *Look Who's Talking* (in which he yammers incessantly but doesn't appear) and the two *Die Hard* movies, the second of which cost so much that it wasn't very profitable.

Nothing better demonstrates the illusory nature of Willis' stardom than the saga of his biggest hit, *Die Hard*. Hot from his TV success, he received \$6 million for the picture. But the public had already grown so sick of his act – which included a risible attempt to become a bluesy singer – that audiences booed every time he appeared in *Die Hard*'s trailer. Things got so bad that 20th Century Fox dropped his name from its advertising campaign.

The movie became a hit anyway, largely because director John McTier is a master of what's called the 'flying glass' school of cinema (the man can really blow up a skyscraper). Even though no one was sure whether Willis helped *Die Hard* to become a success, his mere attachment to such a profitable movie was, in Hollywood's desperate logic, enough to ensure him several years of work as a wisecracking action star. As a colleague quipped, "Fox paid Bruce Willis \$6 million to make him a star".

Personally, I find it hilarious that ordinary citizens are supposed to be horrified when actors and producers keep squeezing money out of studios owned by multinational corporations. I don't care if *Ishtar* lost Coca Cola a fortune; let Sony go blooey backing *Hudson Hawk*. I'm no great fan of Bruce Willis, let alone Joel Silver, but at least

they're making the movies. Call me part of the loony left, but I refuse to identify with international capital.

## Flopping

The other day I "did" coffee with one of Hollywood's few successful women producers. She'd just seen *Thelma and Louise* and couldn't stop talking about it. "This is a really important movie", she said. "Whenever I try to make a movie about women, the studio guys say the same thing: 'You need a male star – women can't open a picture'."

But before I could reply, her face fell: "But what if people don't go to see it? When *She-Devil* bombed, nobody thought that proved anything. The whole world knew it was a terrible movie. But with *Thelma and Louise* – all the studio people think it's a great movie. So if it flops... everybody will say no actress can carry a movie, except maybe Julia Roberts. You know, the worst case scenario is that it could set women's pictures back ten years".

She sighed into her decaf. "I'm really praying that *Hudson Hawk* drops dead at the box office".

## Unwitting alibi

LA critics are often mocked for their shallowness, but I felt like Wittgenstein after seeing the glowing reviews New York gave Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever*, a story of interracial romance whose garbled stridency has been confused with a meaningful commentary on race in America. But while the black press seems aware of this, the white-run media persists in treating Lee as a spokesman for black America.

In the two years since *Do the Right Thing*, one of the best American movies of the 80s, Lee has unwittingly turned himself into a kind of cultural alibi. His high-profile career gives the illusion that American culture is grappling with our tortured racial life.



# Still promising

Movies, TV, MTV, TV news, MTV news, TV news about movies and TV, celebrity gossip, reportage on celebrity gossip, personality journalism, pop music, advertising, advertising for all of the above – that's enfotainment. And its queen, don't you know, is the being who calls herself Madonna.

*Truth or Dare*, Alek Keshishian's highly entertaining behind-the-scenes documentary of Madonna's Blond Ambition tour, opened in the US in the blinding light of total media attention. And most of it was brilliantly orchestrated by the film's canny subject/producer herself.

A highly self-conscious genderbending reflection in the media hall of mirrors, Madonna is something like Mae West redux or Myra Breckinridge come to life. That the graphic the *Post* chose to run was the singer impersonating Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* was one more triumph for her post-Warholian pop art. And five days later, when *Truth or Dare* had its premiere (as a benefit for Aids research), Madonna captured the front page of a second New York tabloid just by "sporting yet another new hair color – not blond, not even Tuesday night's Elvira-black, but mousy brown".

Then it was on to Cannes, where for the first time, and with suitably ironic nostalgia, Madonna could play movie star. While *Truth or Dare* set a new weekend house record at the cinema where it opened, Madonna's overseas escapades continued to dominate New York's nightly news broadcasts for the better part of a week. Indeed, she made front page headlines once more by publicly tongue-kissing the star of the current import hit, *La Femme Nikita*.

Perhaps because Madonna can only play herself (with herself), previous movies had not been kind to this self-made icon. *Truth or Dare* – which offers a remarkable portrait of a sacred monster in her prime – provides a measure of revenge, particularly when *Blond Ambition* hits Hollywood.

"Don't hide back there Warren, get over here", Madonna calls to her erstwhile consort as he visits her dressing room. For a movie star, Beatty looks blatantly uncomfortable and when Madonna calls him a "pussy" he turns a whiter shade of pale. Although Madonna fails to persuade Beatty to share her frame ("The light's good here, don't worry"), the scene reaches its apotheosis when Kevin Costner dances backstage to compliment the

An extraordinary complicity between star and camera marks the new Madonna documentary, reveals  
J. Hoberman

show with: "I thought it was neat". Madonna waits until he turns his back, then sticks her finger down her throat and pretends to gag.

On one hand, *Truth or Dare* is a massive, exceptionally canny promotional; on the other, it's the most ontologically slippery rock doc in the quarter century since D. A. Pennebaker invented the mode, trailing Bob Dylan through London for *Don't Look Back*. Both movies are characterised by an extraordinary complicity between star and camera. It's not the image that's being documented; watching this film is like watching a photograph come up in a developing tray, the image coalesces before your eyes.

Part of Madonna's role is to test the limits of permissible representation. While the softcore erotic fantasy 'Justify My Love' scarcely justified its hype, the sacrilegious 'Like a Prayer', which cost the singer a multi-million dollar deal with Pepsi Cola, showed Madonna to be a genuinely outrageous character. And *Truth or Dare*, in its way, is no less blasphemous. Challenged during the game that gives the movie its title to fellate a bottle of Vichy water, Madonna gives a magnificent performance. (Her entourage screams in

approval when she climactically chugs down the bottle's contents.)

Those looking for revelations may be struck by how easily, at thirty-two, Madonna becomes an excited teenager. Striking too is the star's concern with the idea of family. A bad girl in Toronto, where the police threaten to close her show for "public lewdness", she turns good girl in her home town Detroit, performing with and for her father and brothers.

A well-known motherless child, Madonna considers her troupe her children. "I think I've unconsciously chosen people who are emotionally crippled in some way" is her charming formulation. That most of her dancers are black and gay, the subculture that spawned the voguing craze Madonna appropriated two years ago, puts *Truth or Dare* in dialectical rapport with *Paris Is Burning*.

Tough and assured, Madonna directs everything – technicians, dancers and audience. She even directs her critics, the millions of sociologists, psychologists and students of semiotics who have made her the world's biggest pop star. What is there to say about Madonna that her clothes, accessories, hairstyle and historical references don't already explain? With *Truth or Dare*, Madonna even lays out her own dirty laundry. As rock critic Robert Christgau observed in the *Village Voice*, "instead of waiting for her own Memphis Mafia to spill the beans, [she] commissioned Alek Keshishian to act as her authorized Albert Goldman".

In the great 50s yard sale that was 80s pop culture, Madonna made out like a bandit, carrying off Marilyn's mystique, Elvis' attitude, and a closet full of the advertising mantras that were beamed at women for years. As a self-proclaimed material girl, Madonna decided that if she had one life to live she would live it blonde. Her very own lucky star, she dreamt she became a TV idol in her Maidenform bra and then lived the dream.

Does she or doesn't she? Virgin whore, goldigger free spirit, feminist boytoy, Madonna is Monroe with muscle (and muscles). Her flashes of 'sweetness', her moments of 'vulnerability' are as sincerely self-serving as the group prayer (the "like a prayer") she leads before each show. Blondes may have more fun, but the bottom line here isn't pleasure, it's empowerment.

● *Truth or Dare*, released in the UK as *In Bed with Madonna*, opens on 19 July



Poise and pose: Madonna's post-Warholian air



# Loaves and fishes

It was the year the Salkinds attacked by air and sea. A squadron armed with banners buzzed the beaches daily, interrupting countless lunchtime deals, while a fleet of three (motorised) galleons catered for the tourists and upstaged the sleek hospitality yachts in the harbour. It was all to herald *Christopher Columbus: The Movie*, from the same big spenders who brought you *Superman* and *Santa Claus*. And of course being Cannes – where nothing succeeds better than a sequel unless it's a steal – there were rival Columboes threatened, like the rival Robin Hoods and two Salvador Dalí bio-pics (one promising juicy revelations about the sex lives of Buñuel and Lorca too).

There are so many layers of Cannes that to write only about films seems inadequate. The all night partygoers, the weary hacks, the smooth salesfolk are all part of something that makes possible the occasional miracle. In fact it was the patron saint of film critics, André Bazin, who hit on the best analogy. Like a medieval pilgrimage, Cannes combines the sacred and the profane in a complex ritual.

This year, as always, there were just enough miracles to fortify the faithful and sustain them for another twelve months. First came Agnès Varda's marvellous evocation of her late husband Jacques Demy's provincial childhood, *Jacquot de Nantes*. Avoiding all sentimentality and the oversophistication of hindsight, this is above all a shrewd, economical study of French family life around the Second World War.

What starts as a fascination with the mechanics of making pictures move becomes for the young Jacques (convincingly portrayed by three successive child actors) a refuge from his father's blunt insistence that he train as a mechanic to work in the family garage. Visits to the cinema and puppet theatre with his mother feed his imagination, the attic becomes a studio, and his first cardboard sets (already animated by daring camera movements) anticipate those touching, delirious transformations of the mundane: *Lola* and *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*. Old-fashioned? Perhaps, but only in the sense that biography is a traditional genre, for this is also a highly sophisticated reflection of the social role it once occupied.

How to come unstuck by trying too hard to stay ahead of the game is illustrated by Lars Von Trier's *Europa*, claimed as the last part of a trilogy

Ian Christie makes the pilgrimage to Cannes, and is rewarded with one or two miracles, some false moves into the Euro future, and visions of post-Soviet Russian cinema

which began with *The Element of Crime*. Despite some fancy multi-layering that mimics Quantel and computer paint-box techniques, there's little in this portentous Euro-confection, set in the unrepentant Germany of 1946, that marks any real advance on Sam Fuller's *Verboten*.

Is mannerism then the inevitable fate of subsidised art cinema? Plenty of evidence to suggest it is, not least in Jaco Van Dormael's first feature, *Toto l'héro* (Belgium), the psychobiography of a failure whose life has been blighted by the belief that he was exchanged soon after birth with another baby who grew up a conspicuous success. An intriguing update of the changeling theme, which obviously caught the European Script Fund's eye and helped this to become the first film to achieve Euro-subsidy from conception to release. But unfortunately it is botched by self-conscious visuals and narrative hop-scotch.

## Perverse erotics

Elsewhere in the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs selection, the leading Canadian art film contenders seemed afflicted by similar mannerist excess. *The Adjuster* deployed Atom Egoyan's now familiar perverse erotics of voyeurism on a truly spectacular scale in a tale that ingeniously combines an insurance loss adjuster and a film censor. André Forcier's *Une histoire inventée* ventured boldly into Alan Rudolph romantic comedy terrain with a backstage story of Montreal theatre and jazz folk. Both blew their promising premises in a welter of, respectively, incoherence and sentimentality.

To show that it ain't necessarily thus, the Quinzaine also hosted the

world premiere of Jocelyn Moorhouse's *Proof*, an Australian feature debut of astonishing assurance and powerful simplicity. Lying somewhere between Hitchcock and Nabokov, the film creates an eerie force field around a blind man who assuages his childhood trauma by, bizarrely, taking photographs. These are to confirm what he would see, but of course their evidential value depends upon truthful description. And when a new friend enters the weirdly sado-masochistic, albeit primly suburban, home life of the blind man and his frustrated housekeeper, the results are both hilarious and horrendous. *Proof*, like *Sweetie*, conveys the exhilarating sensation of cinema being rediscovered.

From an unheralded miracle to a confirmation of a major talent reborn. Jacques Rivette's *La Belle noiseuse* follows the procedure he has now made his own, using a classic novel or play which is reworked in the present so that its central intrigue or motif becomes a metaphor. Here, Balzac's *An Unknown Masterpiece* enables Rivette to tackle the mystery of how life becomes art, and in doing so finds its own justification. What's stunning about this serene four hour masterpiece – shown only once in the festival, like a garden oasis in the jungle – is the minimal plotting and bold gamble on the creative process as drama itself.

In what may be the greatest role of his career, Michel Piccoli plays a rich and famous painter who has failed to meet the challenge he set himself ten years earlier to paint a crowning masterpiece, *La Belle noiseuse*. A chance visit by a young painter and his girlfriend leads to five days of torment and invention as both the artist and his new



The Gambler: Michel Piccoli in Jacques Rivette's 'La Belle noiseuse'



model wrestle with their demons. The masterpiece is born, though never seen, and conjugal life resumes. But it can never be the same for all who have been singed by the creative fires.

Paradoxically, this least modernist of Rivette's films (the art work by Bernard Dufour is decidedly *arrière-garde*) actually comes closest to an elemental cinema of image and sound. The painful scratch of a pen searching for a first image; artist and model warily probing each other's motives; the terror of the blank canvas; the weight of time – these are the concerns in which Rivette manages to implicate us. If there's a legitimate post-modern cinema, this must be it.

For an admirer of Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (who hasn't seen *Mo' Better Blues*), it was disappointing to find *Jungle Fever* such a shallow exercise in ethnic tit-for-tat. An office affair between a black architect and his new Italian-American secretary proves inadequate and implausible for Lee's ambitions to tackle middle-class angst. The violent cultural montage of the earlier film, with language, music and acting all heightened to breaking point, is now reduced to an almost genteel exercise in reminding the bourgeoisie of basics, awash in wall-to-wall disco music.

### Big city themes

But as so often in Cannes, a lesson in how to tackle similar themes turned up elsewhere. John Sayles' *City of Hope* may be more than a shade sentimental in its final reconciliation between black, Irish and Italian aspirations, but its sheer drive and energy in tackling the big city themes are impressive, and the dialogue fairly crackles. A welcome return to form by one of America's essential independents.

The perils of production in post-perestroika Eastern Europe were once again writ large throughout the festival. Of all the co-productions on show, the best I saw – and most instructive – was Kieslowski's first venture outside Poland. *The Double Life of Veronika* is a film in two parts – one Polish, the other French. The strength of the former compared with the latter's slightly fey quality reminds us that film-makers usually work best in a culture they know from the inside out. That said, Zbigniew Preisner's thrilling music (part of an altogether compelling soundtrack), together with Irene Jacob's luminous performance as



Stalin in 'A Tale of the Unextinguished Moon'

two women (or is it really one?) whose lives are mysteriously intertwined, make this a miraculous experience.

Not surprisingly, the best work to emerge from the relative chaos of latterday production in Russia (which must be regarded as post-Soviet) is also that which makes least concessions to imagined Western demands.

Evgeny Tsymbal attracted attention in Britain two years ago with his debut, *Defence Council Sedov*, set during the show trials of the mid-30s. Inexplicably, his first feature had to be tracked down on a cassette at the Mosfilm Market stand, but was well worth the effort. *A Tale of the Unextinguished Moon* is based on a 1926 story by the experimental writer Boris Pilnyak which hinted strongly at Stalin's role in the mysterious death of the Defence Commissar Mikhail Frunze in 1925. Tsymbal faithfully echoes Pilnyak's vivid elliptical style in a film that stands head and shoulders above most current Russian production. And his portrayal of the boorish, still insecure Stalin has a chilling credibility amid the gallery of other deftly realised period characters that includes doctors, apparachiks and soldiers.

Much more conventional, though superbly played (Inna Churikova in the lead) and photographed (Pavel Lebechev) is Kristofovich's *Adam's Rib*, about the interaction of three generations of women in a cramped Moscow flat. It will undoubtedly be called Chekhovian, but this shouldn't deter: the film has the bite of Raizman's social dramas of the 60s and 70s.

No one would mistake Vladimir Bortko's *Afghan Breakdown* for an entry in the art film stakes, which may explain why so few Brits bothered to investigate it. But while this often ugly and defiantly brutal Soviet-Italian co-production (starring the Italian Michele Placido) sells itself like a Chuck Norris actioner, it also provides a depressingly accurate picture of the bitter legacy this war has left among Russians, with cynicism and self-pity jostling alongside patriotism and moral confusion.

Evidence of the return to traditional values which the war helped accelerate came from another Market curiosity, *The Boys*, a naive but rather touching adaptation of the Little Ilyusha strand from Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* by Renita and Yuri Grigoriev. The film has the distinction of being probably the first post-Soviet

production to promote openly the Russian Orthodox church.

The fact that there were any British films at all on show may be counted a kind of miracle – and certainly a triumph of determination over government turpitude. Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* (shown in the Semaine de la Critique) struck a chord with French press and critics, going on to win the Critics' Prize.

With Ken Loach a firm Cannes favourite, a good reception was more than likely for his warmly humorous, though equally acerbic, celebration of working-class solidarity, *Riff-Raff*. In the event, so loud was the acclaim that Channel 4 had second thoughts about an early transmission and *Riff-Raff* now seems likely to get a well-deserved extended theatrical window after its initial launch by BFI Distribution in April. Good news for anyone who cares about the future of real film-making in Britain. And who else, apart from Mike Leigh, is trying to show a recognisable image of life on the cusp of Thatcher's Britain?

### National humour

Spending eight to ten hours a day in other people's space and time certainly broadens the mind (and I'm not thinking about the necrophiliac *Lune froide* or even *In Bed with Madonna*, which we all experienced vicariously when the town nearly came to a standstill).

*Go, Trabi, Go* (Peter Timm) offers a remarkable post-unification insight into that uniquely German emotion, *Schadenfreude*. It's basically a string of put-down jokes about the notorious East German car, the Trabant, and, by implication, those who drove it. Samples: "How do you double the value of a Trabant?" "Fill it up with petrol". A Trabant runs off the road into a field near a cow-pat. "What are you?", says the cow-pat. "A car". "If you're a car, I'm a pizza". Funny thing, national humour.

(This report was filed on 17 May; *La Belle noiseuse* won the Grand Prix Spécial de Cannes; Irene Jacob won the Best Actress award for *The Double Life of Veronika*.)

● **Cracovian Slip** Contrary to the impression created by our report in the Festivals Brief section of *Sight and Sound* Vol.1 No.1, Andrej Kolodynski is alive and well and was actively involved in organising this year's Cracow Festival of Short Films.



# McMovies

There was a lot of grumbling about the "Americanisation of Cannes" this year, what with *Barton Fink* sweeping the awards and several of the judges (Roman Polanski, Alan Parker, Whoopi Goldberg, Vangelis, Vittorio Storaro), reportedly expressing the view that characteristically 'European' films like Jacques Rivette's four hour, nominally plotted *La Belle noiseuse* were, in the words of Polanski, "boring, boring, boring". But it's hard to respond to anxieties like that with anything more than, "Well, what else is new?"

The truth is that US movies have dominated European, not to mention world markets, since the end of the Second World War, and have overshadowed other national cinemas for the last decade and a half. With a few exceptions, little of interest has emerged from the Continent since the 60s and 70s.

The numbers tell the general story. In Spain, where revenues to US films actually dipped about 2 per cent last year, grosses for US pictures dwarfed those for homegrown product to the tune of \$253 million to \$29.4 million, earning a market share of 85 per cent. In Italy, US films were the first five in the top ten grosses list, with *Pretty Woman* taking \$17.6 million for a 70 per cent share of the market.

In 1990, US movies took 85 per cent of all the cinema revenues in Germany. In Britain, US companies accounted for 78 to 85 per cent (depending on the source of the figures) of the market. Total US cinema revenues in all European countries rose from \$403.3 million in 1985 to \$983.3 million in 1989 – more than half the total earned from overseas markets.

## Pure Rambo

The largest overseas market for Hollywood movies is Japan. Here US rentals were up 20 per cent over 1989, and these in turn were up 48.5 per cent over 1988. Of the 704 movies released in Japan last year, only 239 were homegrown. About half the rest were American-made.

But despite US strength in Japan, American trade representative Carla Hills is convinced there is an unspoken conspiracy among exhibitors to prevent even more US movies from reaching Japanese screens. According to industry lobbyist, Jack Valenti, US films play in only 780 of Japan's 12,000 theatres. The studios feel Japan can stand more cinemas and are eager to

A French cement king is backing Bertolucci's latest film, but the presence of new European players in production is not necessarily good news, argues Peter Biskind

provide just that, in partnership with a Japanese supermarket chain.

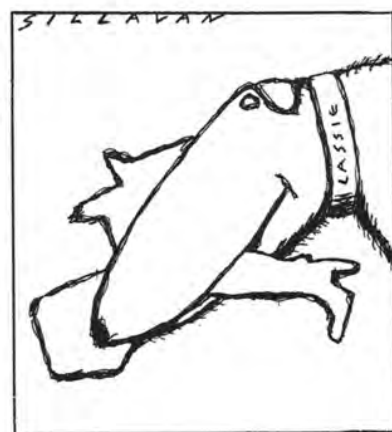
"The rest of the world happens to be very interested in what we do and so they buy our culture", said Bill Soady, Tri-Star vice-president of distribution, in *Variety*. But there are consequences. The most saleable American films are the Carolco-type, big budget action films that have little difficulty in crossing national boundaries because their scripts are so pared down. Not only have these movies had an unhappy impact on US film culture, but the way they are financed has exerted an inflationary pressure on production costs, driving out offbeat products. (Although it is also true that an argument could be made that in the case of the Rambo films, say, the market has conspired to recreate the kind of 'pure' cinema that hasn't been seen since the silent era.)

Next year, when trade barriers finally fall, Europe may get its revenge. Although the number of co-productions was actually down during the 80s, according to *Screen Digest*, this is bound to change. New European players with production slates and release schedules sprung fullblown from bloated bank accounts are popping up like mushrooms. For example, French cement king Francis Bouygues's CIBY 2000 is backing Bernardo Bertolucci (*Buddhal*) and new films by Pedro Almodovar and David Lynch.

Also from France comes UGC's first British co-production, *The Arrowtooth Waltz*, a \$16 million Western sporting a bizarre collection of actors that includes Faye Dunaway, Johnny Depp, Michael J. Pollard and, of course, Jerry Lewis, all directed by the Yugoslavian Emir Kusturica. UGC plans about ten or fifteen of these confections a year. Then there's Canal Plus, which is producing a group of films with several entities, including Arnon Milchan's Regency and Warner Bros. First films out are Mel Brooks' *Life Stinks* and David Mamet's *Homicide*.

Even the French water company, Générale des Eaux, is getting in on the act with its studio Générale d'Images and a film set in Vietnam. What next? The Paris department of sanitation with its *Le Studio des Ordures*?

From Italy, there's PentAmerica Pictures, the plaything of Italian media baron Silvio Berlusconi, with an ambitious group of six films that includes several big name Hollywood directors and stars: Martin Scorsese directing



*Silence*, Ted Kotcheff directing a Kafka bio-pic(!) and Kathleen Turner in *House of Cards*.

But the more things change, the more they stay the same. Money is money, whether it's American, Japanese or European, so the increase in the number of European productions and co-productions is not necessarily a good thing. We'll see a lot more movies in which Christopher Lambert plays a murdered Polish priest, or Mickey Rourke St Francis of Assisi.

## National blemishes

The European Community has tried to protect the integrity of national markets (if not 'cinemas') by making it difficult for co-productions to qualify for local subsidies and tax benefits unless they meet 'national content' requirements and by demanding that key personnel be drawn from the European country of origin. These rules, while they get Hollywood lobbyists hot under the collar, are made to be broken, or at least imaginatively manipulated. Witness *Green Card*, a French/Australian production with an Australian director and French star, then an American star for good measure.

*Green Card* is the perfect example of the malign effect of co-productions – a hybrid, neither-fish-nor-foul movie that makes use of foreign talent but is so permeated by Hollywood values that it might as well have been a Hollywood film. *Green Card* feels like a Disney movie, and in fact was distributed in the US by Disney, which so neatly assimilated it to its marketing campaign for *Pretty Woman* that the two were virtually interchangeable.

The awful truth is that the market, left to its own devices, will produce a wave of Euro-American blockbusters, of global McMovies, free from the 'blemishes' of national cultures.



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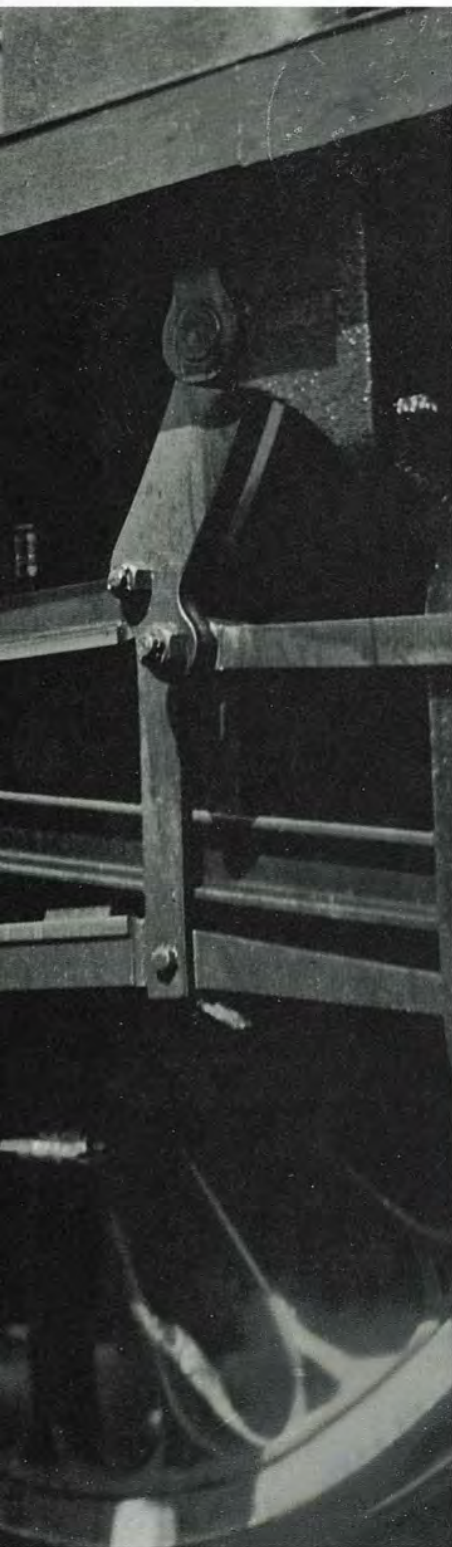
# La Bête humaine

Adapted from an Emile Zola novel of the same title, the film tells the story of Jacques Lantier, a train driver on the Paris-Le Havre line who witnesses a murder. The killer is Jacques Roubaud, deputy station master at Le Havre. His accomplice is his young wife Séverine and their victim is the wealthy Grandmorin, Séverine's godfather – and possibly father – but also, Roubaud has just learnt, her lover. Lantier falls in love with Séverine and so doesn't turn them in to the police. From that moment, Roubaud's marriage to Séverine begins to disintegrate, Roubaud becomes a card-playing wreck, and Séverine, haunted by the memory of the murder, asks Lantier to kill him. He tries but fails. Later on, in a fit of madness induced by a disease inherited from his alcoholic forebears, Lantier kills Séverine, and finally kills himself by jumping off his train.

● Made in France, 1938. Scripted and directed by Jean Renoir. Director of photography: Kurt Courant. Music: Joseph Kosma. With Jean Gabin (Jacques Lantier), Simone Simon (Séverine), Fernand Ledoux (Jacques Roubaud), Julien Carette (Pecqueux).







How has 'La Bête humaine', a film fuelled by crime and suicide, come to have such a vital place in French national life? And why does Jean Gabin rival De Gaulle in the affections of the French? Ginette Vincendeau explains

# The beauty of the beast



Gabin's other love: Simone Simon

The arrival of a new print of *La Bête humaine* in British cinemas raises the question of why the film has such lasting power. To some, any Jean Renoir film must necessarily be a masterpiece. For others, the key lies in the subtle eroticism of the Jean Gabin-Simone Simon relationship. And train buffs rank it high as a train movie. Without denying any of these approaches, I want to focus on the film's special place in French culture, and on the figure of Jean Gabin, the French proletarian hero.

Since history likes great men, it is not surprising that *La Bête humaine*, in which three of the greatest names in French literature and cinema joined forces, has become emblematic in French culture. A life-size wooden replica of *La Lison*, Jacques Lantier's steam engine, was the final exhibit in the three hour parade down the Champs-Élysées that marked the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution. Driven by a Gabin lookalike, the model was called upon to evoke an idea of the French proletariat visualised by Renoir in 1938, dramatically shaped by Zola in 1890, but clearly born on Bastille Day in 1789.

*La Bête humaine* has attracted a great deal of criticism. Renoir has been accused of taking the politics out of Zola, and of reducing the novel's social commentary on the corrupt grand-bourgeoisie of the Second Empire to a few glimpses of an elegant Parisian mansion and the office of a judge who claims that he 'knows' murderers by looking at their eyes. Above all, he replaced Zola's apocalyptic ending of a driverless train of soldiers speeding to inevitable disaster with Lantier's suicide, followed by a peaceful gathering of his SNCF mates around his corpse.

So the film has been seen as a disappointing ideological turning point in Renoir's career. The Popular Front director who celebrated group solidarity and class struggle in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (and *La Vie est à nous*) now appeared to regress politically, producing a story of individual doom in the tradition of the poetic realism of Carné and Prévert epitomised by *Quai des brumes*, which, incidentally, Renoir considered reactionary.

Another interpretation has it that *La Bête humaine* is simply symptomatic of the grim political climate of 1938, with the end of the Popular Front and the Spanish Civil War and the anticipated approach of the Second World War. In this version, Gabin's suicide at the ►



◀ end of the film comes to represent the lost hopes of the French proletariat.

How can a single film prompt such different readings? And, more surprisingly, how can this sombre story of murderous, suicidal, congenitally diseased workers be used as a symbol, in 1989, of the glory of the French Revolution?

### Noir and voyeurs

In *La Bête humaine* Renoir drew on a tradition within nineteenth-century French literature and art of exploring the 'little people' of France. Zola, himself an accomplished photographer, saw his 'cinematic' writing as a means of documenting the lives of the French people. His *Rougon-Macquart* saga – of which *La Bête humaine* is a part – was a reply to Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, but equipped with the scientific baggage of the time, in particular ideas about heredity and the theory of evolution.

But such novels shared more than a documentary impulse: they exhibited a positively voyeuristic fascination for the poor, the exploited, the criminal element. In these essentially bourgeois accounts, the labouring classes are also the dangerous classes – a cultural trope that found its way via Zola into the 'proletarian literature' of the 20s and was to be of great consequence for French cinema.

French cinema in the 30s has two major modes: light and dark. Partly because of its literary heritage, it is the dark tradition which has attracted cultural respectability and international fame for French cinema and through a number of mediations forms part of the archaeology of American *film noir*. (Lang's *Scarlett Street* was based on Renoir's *La Chienne* and *Human Desire* on *La Bête humaine*.)

Photographed for the most part by the German émigré Kurt Courant, who also worked on *Le Jour se lève*, *La Bête humaine* displays many of the stylistic features of *film noir* – chiaroscuro and expressionist lighting, Venetian blind shadows – which are at their most powerful in the scene in which Séverine is murdered. Zola and German Expressionist cinema meet in these oppressive night scenes, as well as in the insistence on mirrors and reflections.

But Renoir's film is less relentlessly *noir* than *Quai des brumes*, *Le Jour se lève* or the works of Julien Duvivier and Pierre Chenal. The dark alleys, courtyards, hotel rooms and dingy hovels so characteristic of the dark tradition are relieved by light moments, both in mood and

in the lighting of the film. There is the scene with Flore, with its emphasis on the bright sky; the meeting between Lantier and Séverine in the park; the workers' dance; several of the scenes connected with the train.

It is in the scenes centred around the railway that Renoir manages to be both faithful to Zola and historically located in the 30s. Echoing Zola's own methods, Renoir, Gabin, Carette and Ledoux all studied aspects of railway work so they could reproduce more accurately practices and gestures. Zola's elegiac description of the engine is transposed into the film's famous opening sequence, in which Gabin and Carette bring their train into Le Havre, communicating by looks and signals over the noise of the engine. This documentary impulse informs several other scenes between Gabin and Carette, especially their meals in the workers' canteen, where the recording of proletarian gestures and language gives banal moments a density far in excess of their narrative function.

The train in *La Bête humaine* is the embodiment of both the death drive and of social movement. Crime and suicide take place on it, and on a more abstract level it represents Lantier's murderous instinct. But Renoir is also careful to emphasise the solidarity of the railway workers and the function of the railway in the building of modern France. The newly created national company is prominently displayed in the word ETAT (state) on the side of engines and trains and is seen behind Roubaud and Séverine's heads as they are waiting to kill Grandmorin. After Lantier's death and Pecqueux's eulogy, a guard summons people to clear the tracks and get the train on its way – an image of professionalism and continuity. Rather than abiding by the *noir* tradition and



Lantier: hero or victim?

Masculinity is traditionally defined by action; in Gabin it is characterised by immobility and failure

ending the film with Gabin going off into the night, Renoir ends with a light moment. The tragic destinies of the characters are embedded in a more epic sense of workers' lives.

So *La Bête humaine* can be read both as the expression of failed hopes and as the symbol of workers' progress. Scholars may deplore what they see as the absence of social class in the film, but the railway workers' union, which awarded Gabin honorary membership in 1938, clearly approved of the portrayal of themselves. And when French railway workers went on strike in 1987, they invoked *La Bête humaine* as a nostalgic image of good working conditions.

But *La Bête humaine* also conjures up nostalgia for a time when cinema was a truly popular activity. The replica of *La Lison* on the Champs-Élysées evoked a memory of a form of community entertainment that has now more or less vanished. And central to this memory are the stars of the time – it was Gabin, as much as *La Lison*, who was on parade on 14 July 1989.

### The trapped beast

The often-repeated anecdote that *La Bête humaine* was made because Jean Gabin wanted to drive a locomotive, true as it may be, masks the fact that without a star of his status, it would have been hard for Renoir to have raised the money to make the film at all. So in a basic economic sense, Gabin is as much the 'author' of the film as Renoir is. And the complete overlap between his star persona and the character of Jacques Lantier means that he shares the authorship of the film in other ways too.

Gabin was the perfect actor for the French *noir* tradition, combining a sense of working-class identity with crime. In most of his 30s classic films, his destiny is 'tragic' – as well as playing a murderer, he commits suicide (*Pépé-le-Moko*, *La Bête humaine*, *Le Jour se lève*), is killed or murdered (*La Bandera*, *Quai des brumes*), or morally destroyed (*La Belle équipe*, *Gueule d'amour*). Yet he also played the regular guy who gets on well with his mates: "Oedipus in a cloth cap", as André Bazin put it. Gabin's ability to condense such contradictory values made him the perfect Jacques Lantier, the hero marked by the hereditary *felure* (flaw) but otherwise demonstrating perfect health and solidity.

*La Bête humaine* confirmed Gabin as the top male star at the French box office. It was a popularity derived from a carefully judged style of performance – despite the impression he gave



of always playing himself – and from his ability to present French audiences with an acceptable version of masculinity that nevertheless exposed some of its less acceptable aspects.

Gabin came from the music hall, where as one of Mistinguett's 'toy boys' he sang witty ditties full of innuendo. Those familiar only with his 'classic' films might be surprised to see him with brilliantined hair and make-up in early features such as *Chacun sa chance* and *Paris-Beguin*. *La Bandera* (Duvivier, 1935) signalled his entry into stardom, with a definitive switch to melodramatic roles and the adoption of a different style of performance. Gone was the exhibitionism of the music hall and in its place came an understated style of acting which worried some of his directors on the set until they saw the result on screen.

As Renoir put it, "Gabin, with the slightest tremor in his face, could express the most violent feelings". Many compared him with other French actors of the time who used a wide register of gesticulations retained from the stage (compare the performances of Gabin and Carette in *La Bête humaine*), and a rhetorical style of speech. Gabin bordered on the laconic, yet at the same time retained through his gestures a specific, class-inflected identity: the walk, the way the cigarette dangled from his mouth, the way he ate, not to mention his accent, which was to 'give him away' when he played grand-bourgeois parts in the 50s.

Another important feature of the Gabin persona was that he was equally appealing to men and women. As one writer put it: "men want to slap him in the back, women to take him in their arms". This status as a powerful figure of identification for both sexes is central to *La Bête humaine*: significantly it is Roubaud, not Séverine, who insists initially on inviting Lantier into their home; whatever happens in their triangle is not a question of male rivalry. Long before the 'new man' of the 80s, the Gabin persona included attributes traditionally considered feminine: gentleness and caring, but also weakness and passivity.

Masculinity is traditionally defined by action and power; in the Gabin persona it is characterised by immobility and failure. Though he is the main protagonist of *La Bête humaine*, Lantier is trapped and is 'objectified' by the camera, occupying the place traditionally assigned to women in classical cinema. *La Bête humaine* opens with Lantier on the train,

but the narrative is really set in motion by the Roubauds' crime. His entrapment in their story determines his fate, which is sealed by Séverine's pleading look at him.

Lantier's ambiguous place in the narrative is paralleled by the camera work. It is hardly surprising that Gabin should receive star treatment, with many of the close-ups and camera movements ending on his face, but it is noticeable in *La Bête humaine* that his face is at least as glamourised as Simone Simon's. The lighting, with particular emphasis on his eyes, is not simply showcasing a handsome face, but is denoting a deeply disturbed mental state. This is made obvious in two shots in the last engine depot scene after Séverine's murder: the tracking shot over her dead body ending on his face and the shot where he looks at himself in the mirror, connecting with the judge's earlier remark that he can recognise a murderer by looking at his eyes. The effect of entrapment is marked by repeated framings of Gabin in enclosed spaces, behind window panes, in bed.

### De Gaulle and Gabin

So how could such a paralysed and disturbed hero come to epitomise the virile French worker? *La Bête humaine* is the perfect Gabin vehicle to work this out. His relationship to his community in all his films is ambivalent: he belongs and yet he doesn't. In *La Bête humaine* this is clearly shown in the dance scene, where the camera finds him on the edge, looking at his fellow workers dancing; he goes in very briefly, comes out again. His most antisocial act, the murder of Séverine, takes place during this community event, with Renoir linking the two together through the romantic song.

But the ambivalence of Gabin's position in *La Bête humaine* is on a wider scale. He is a passive 'object', trapped by the Roubauds' crime, itself determined by the wealthy Grandmorin and by a socially caused, inherited 'flaw': alcoholism. Yet he is also a subject, an agent with a social identity, competent at his job, liked and respected by his colleagues. Revered within his own group, Lantier is still nothing on the larger scale of a society ruled by the likes of Grandmorin. The fact that Séverine – the "left-overs from an old man" – is passed from Grandmorin to Roubaud and then from Roubaud to Lantier highlights the doomed attempt by each man to take up symbolically the other's position higher up the scale. That the woman has

to pay with her life for colluding in this male game is a story which deserves further analysis.

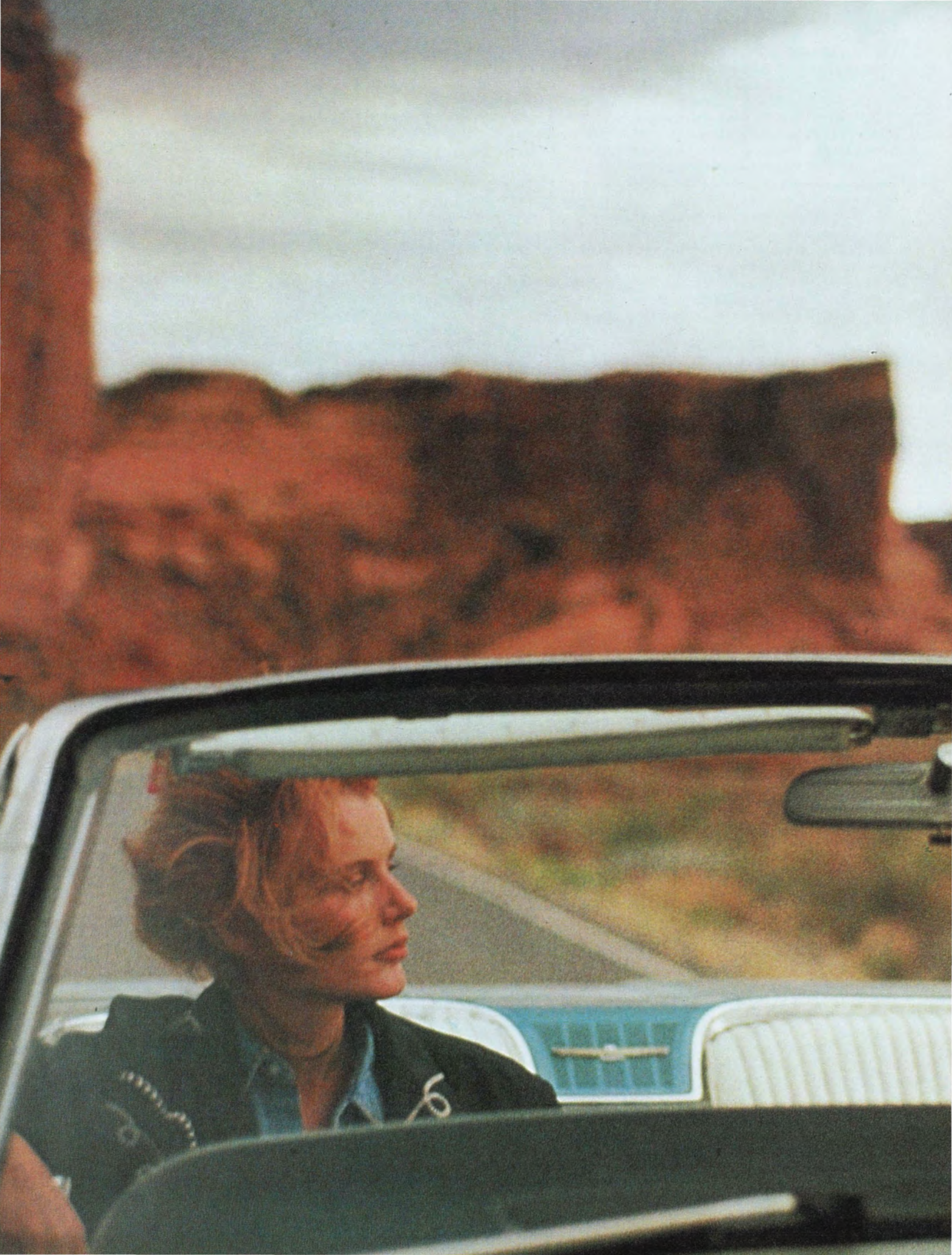
It is through this paradox of strong subject versus passive object that the Gabin persona defines working-class masculinity. And because he was able to smooth away many of the contradictions, Jean Gabin allowed his audience to empathise with his powerless position in French society while at the same time taking pleasure in his momentary triumphs. The fact that this 'human beast' was also beautiful, and beautifully shot, only added to the spectators' pleasure, then and now.

Gabin is certainly an icon of French cinema – scarcely a book on the subject is published without his face on its cover – but his place in French culture is more significant than that. The impact of his death in 1976 was rivalled in post-war France only by that of General De Gaulle. Both men incarnated a 'certain idea of France' – a consensual, populist dream of national unity in which the Popular Front of the mid-30s, the years of Gabin's greatest achievements, occupies a place second only to that of the French Revolution. The years 1935-38 saw not only the temporary unification of left and centre political parties, but also a cultural *rapprochement* between intellectuals and the working class. As the hero of *La Bête humaine* and *La Belle équipe*, Gabin embodied this imaginary unity, bridging the divisions of a split society.

So powerful a symbol was Gabin that in the 60s, when he had become a rich landowner accused of excessive land accumulation, public opinion and the press (even on the left) sided with him against the legitimate demands of his neighbouring farmers. On Bastille Day 1989 the overlap between this mythical actor and a 'certain idea of France' was completed when Frédéric Mitterrand (film and TV personality and nephew of the president) commented, as the parade was going by, that the best version of 'La Marseillaise' was that sung by Jean Gabin in *La Grande illusion*.

● For readers interested in further explorations of *La Bête humaine*, see: Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir* (1975); Christopher Faulkner, *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (1986); Michèle Lagny, 'The Fleeing Gaze, Jean Renoir's *La Bête humaine*' in *French Film: Texts and Contexts*, edited by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau (1990); Alexandre Sesonske, *Jean Renoir, The French Films 1924-1939* (1980).









Looking to each other:  
Susan Sarandon and  
Geena Davis travel  
a Western landscape,  
left, toting guns,  
resisting men, right



# Roads to freedom

When two gun-toting women take to the road together in Ridley Scott's 'Thelma and Louise', the history of the road movie, from 'Gun Crazy' to 'Wild at Heart', comes suddenly into fresh view, argues Manohla Dargis. On page 18 Amy Taubin talks to Ridley Scott about casting the film, its controversial ending—and his next project, 'Christopher Columbus'



"Whither goest thou, America, in thy shiny car in the night?" Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

"I always wanted to travel, I just never got the opportunity" Thelma, *Thelma and Louise*

Set in the late 40s, but not published until 1957, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* is the beat generation's seminal celebration of the joys of roadside America. Fast cars, whisky, women, a few, last, soiled dollars – the hipster's journey was the pleasure principle on wheels. His heyday was the 50s. Then the car transformed the American landscape and the populuxe population motored on in aerodynamically styled cars ready for lift off, as General Motors continued to displace public transport with its "dynamic obsolescence".

Years after Kerouac's death, the road remains a favourite idiom, whether of an aging beat such as Robert Frank, a middle-aged *enfant* such as David Lynch or the scout Jim Jarmusch. And even if America's road network has now been reduced to an endless tangle of freeways and concrete clovers – closer to J. G. Ballard's apocalyptic *Crash* than to Kerouac's literary joyride – the myth endures. It certainly fuels Ridley Scott's new film, *Thelma and Louise*, the story of two women friends on the run for killing a rapist. But unlike its innumerable siblings, this film doesn't just recycle an idiom, it rewrites the road movie, custom-fitting it to female specifications.

The road defines the space between town and country. It is an empty expanse, a *tabula rasa*, the last true frontier. Its myth echoes down the history of US cinema, from films such as Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night* (1948) to Robert Altman's remake, *Thieves Like Us*, shot nearly thirty years later.

The road trip is always a male trip and the road movie makes literal the rite of passage that Oedipally-driven narratives demand of their male heroes. If a woman hops a ride with a man, the journey, perfumed with a female sexuality, breeds danger and violence rather than pleasure.

Motherhood tempers the *femme fatale*, as in *You Only Live Once*, but severed from the domestic sphere, as in *Bonnie and Clyde* or *Badlands*, women appear to provoke rituals of frenzied violence. For women who travel alone, the stakes are somewhat modified. They either end up victim to violence, as in *Psycho* – the ultimate bad trip – or land in a fringe subgenre, such as the women's prison film *Untamed Youth* or biker film *She-Devils on Wheels*.

Veering off from the mainstream, *Thelma and Louise* has two women travelling the road together. But what explicitly separates this film from the generic chaff, making it more than a case of incidental cross-dressing, is the distinctive means by which the road to the self is travelled. In short, *Thelma and Louise* become outlaws the moment they seize control of their bodies. Theirs is a crime of self-defence, their bandit identities forced on them by a gendered lack of freedom, their journey grounded in the politics of the body. In a culture where the female body is traded, circulated in a perverse

**Conquering women: in 'Stagecoach' (1938), right, 'Gun Crazy' (1949), below, and 'Bonnie and Clyde' (1967), below right, the women need to be tamed**



**Boys' own story: the machine as pleasure principle in 'Easy Rider' (1969), right**



exchange, for a woman to seize power over her body is still a radical act.

The contrast with the sexual politics of three other road movies – Joseph Lewis' *Gun Crazy* (1949), Jonathan Demme's *Something Wild* (1986) and David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990) – is revealing. In Lewis' peripatetic *amour fou*, the antihero, Bart Tare, is taken on a violent psychosexual spree through his dual obsession with guns and his lover, Annie Laurie Starr. In this film noir, the journey to manhood begins and ends in the pastoral milieu of youth, but is thrown off course by the relentlessly sexual woman. Brutal and explicitly non-maternal, Annie wilfully uses desire to pitch the couple into a fevered criminality that forces them on to the road. As in the earlier *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (a road movie with low mileage), the woman's body and the road are interchangeable, sites each man must travel – as if against his will – to certain destruction.

#### **Erotic escapades**

In Jonathan Demme's *Something Wild*, a white yuppie's cross-country trip is the stuff of existential heroics, a search for self that pivots on his taming of a 'wild' white female body in soulful Africana drag. Over the course of the fugitive couple's journey, Demme's heroine transforms from Lulu into Audrey, a metamorphosis that has her replace red lipstick, black wig and African accoutrements for blonde hair and a virginal white dress. It's a transformation that, as if to assuage the troubling teleology, Demme simultaneously parallels with a retinue of 'positive' blackness – homeboy, church-going folks, a singing cowboy.

If Demme's vision embraces a well-intentioned liberalism, David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* is its reactionary adjunct. A road film jerry-rigged as a post-modern *Wizard of Oz*, *Wild at Heart* is

peopled with the director's routine obsessions – anomalies (physical and otherwise), sadistic cruelty, sex crimes. Lula Fortune and Sailor Ripley, young lovers on the run, are on the "yellow brick road" of freedom and erotic escapade, trying to put distance between them and Lula's crazy mama, a woman obsessed with controlling her daughter and imagined as the Wicked Witch of the East incarnate.

Lula's body is already conquered before the film begins (she was raped as a teenager). It's a frontier that remains only to be explored, ravaged and eventually domesticated – by motherhood and marriage, no less. As in *Something Wild*, the woman's body is contested terrain, but the conflict here is more insidious. In *Wild at Heart* the struggle over Lula and the journey are launched by the death of a black man, whose brains are beaten out by Sailor within the film's first minutes. Later, in yet another grotesque tableau, a white woman screams "fuck me" to a black man who pulls the trigger on a white man sandwiched between them.

Fear of miscegenation stalks this movie, from one death to another. This land is your land, this land is my land – but hands off the white women. Property is a constitutional right, and Sailor is a man whose sense of proprietary privilege is as baroque as his snake-skin jacket, which, as he reminds Lula, is "a symbol of my individuality and my belief in personal freedom".

As if in direct reply to this tradition, in which white supremacy is the unspoken subtext, a key scene in *Thelma and Louise* has a black Rastafarian cycling incongruously into the picture. *Thelma and Louise* have robbed a highway patrolman of his gun – a symbolic castration – and locked him in his car trunk. The stormtrooper-turned-crybaby wiggles a small, white, very wormy finger through an airhole





Wild and troubling women: 'Something Wild' (1986), right, and 'Wild at Heart' (1990), below



The allegorical road, plus women: Scott's 'Thelma and Louise' (1991), above

after the women leave, only to have the Rasta blow back the exhaust of his spliff in reply. The American landscape has ceased to be the exclusive province of white masculinity.

While *Thelma and Louise* doesn't pretend to remedy a heritage of oppression, it does make tracks as a feminist road movie. And what sweetens the equation further is that it is also a Western, retooled with .45s not Winchesters, '66 T-Birds not pintos. Thelma and Louise embody classic Western archetypes, with a twist. Thelma is simple and sweet, childlike and unworldly. She's the woman John Wayne kisses goodbye in the *Red River* prologue, Marilyn Monroe in *River of No Return*, and again, later and sadder, in *The Misfits*. Louise is tough and knowing, a saloon gal like Dietrich's Destry or Julia London in *Man of the West*. "Not this weekend, sweetie", jokes Louise to a male co-worker about Thelma, "she's running away with me". What begins as the women's retreat from masculinity, a weekend slumber party, ends up an adventure of girlfriends, guns and guts.

### Crossing boundaries

Thelma and Louise may leave town all smiles, Dolly Parton denim and lace, but their getaway turns ugly as soon as they leave home. At their first stop Thelma is assaulted in a parking lot by a man with whom she's casually danced and flirted. The film declares its intentions the moment Louise interrupts the rape, answering the order to "suck my cock" with a bullet through his chest. Unlike *Wild at Heart*, this frontier isn't open to exploitation. When the women hit the road a second time, they're not on vacation from men, they're running from the law – not just the Pinkertons or J. Edgar Hoover, but the law of the father.

In contrast to Bonnie and Clyde, Thelma and Louise's crime isn't murder, it's subjectivity.

What's at stake in *Thelma and Louise* is paternal authority, whether it's a rapist named Harlon, Thelma's noxious husband, or the father-like Hal. In *True Grit* and *The Silence of the Lambs*, strong female characters lean on, or learn from, men. In *Thelma and Louise* women look to each other to survive.

Within the usual terms of gender, it's a maxim that feminine desires are equated with passivity and masculine with action, a truism Scott's film upends. It's this familiar logic that frames the proverbial pioneer woman in the cabin doorway and fixes *Pretty Woman*'s Hollywood hooker for romantic conquest on her tenement fire escape. The same formula finds Thelma a dizzy housewife married to a domineering carpet salesman. "He's your husband, not your father", Louise reminds her friend. Down the road, Thelma repeats this homily to her husband in a telephoned declaration of independence and a life reborn.

Unlike films that submit women to a spurious transvestitism (such as Blake Edward's *Switch*), the changes in Thelma and Louise are more than merely cosmetic. As in *Something Wild*, clothing is saturated with meaning, but where Demme's Lula strips away the 'exotic' to get at the essence, trading danger for gentility, black for white, Thelma and Louise are designing a different paradigm.

Louise swaps all her jewellery – including an engagement ring – for a white cowboy hat, while Thelma sports a black T-shirt that features a smiling skull and the legend "Drivin' my life away". But there's more to these outlaws than butch get-ups, more than whimsy at stake when Louise tosses her lipstick in the dirt. The physical transformations parallel the women's wild rush down the American road. At each state border they cross, another boundary – both ontological and literal – is transgressed.

In *Thelma and Louise*, homicide and mayhem pale in comparison to the implications of the friendship of women.

In much the same way as Demme clutters his roadside America with white kitsch and negritude, Scott trots out a miscellany of masculinity. "Fill her up", orders Louise to a gas-station attendant, ignoring the testosterone-swelled Michelin man who pumps iron nearby. Cowboy, outlaw, lawman: registers of masculine identity circulate in Scott's frame. There's Thelma's boorish husband, Daryl, who makes her a football widow; the women's cowboy lovers, J.D. and Jimmy; Hal, the friendly Arkansas chief of police and benign exception to unjust law – leading men relegated here to supporting roles.

### In the absence of men

A touring musician, Jimmy is the new-age cowboy with the seductive sulk of crooner Chris Isaak, while J.D., with his ten-gallon hat and twitching hips, is the sexual outlaw of *Giant* and *Badlands* – the film's lone camera movement across a human body is reserved for Thelma's gaze at the rippled muscles of his belly. Men are signposts along this freaky female trip – the good, the bad and the ugly, each suggesting a different heterosexual possibility, a potential refuge or threat.

From *Easy Rider* through *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* to *Midnight Run*, men in the buddy movie have a relationship in order to develop their individual autonomy. In contrast, Thelma and Louise forge an alliance that isn't based on joint narcissism and private prerogative – or the competing favours of men. It is most vividly realised in a scene in which the women rip through the night, dwarfed by a landscape of red buttes and mesas. Dramatic and imposing, this is the classic frontier tableau, the one ►



◀ eternally associated with John Ford's most memorable Westerns. It's the image that opens *Thelma and Louise*, when nostalgia – laden black and white – gives way to vivid colour, an iconic reference to a celluloid landscape as familiar as Lincoln's craggy profile on a nickel. It's the panorama that at a glance invokes the place where women are at once domesticated and uncivilised – as in *Stagecoach*, both the mother and the whore – and where the land, like women, is both good and bad, bountiful and punishing, wild and tame.

It's amid the buttes and mesas, a visual cue for Ford's Monument Valley, that *Thelma and Louise* mark one of the film's most intimate moments. As Marianne Faithfull's ravaged voice fills the air with 'The Ballad of Lucy Jordan', *Thelma and Louise* trade swigs of Wild Turkey: "At the age of thirty-seven, she realised she'd never ride through Paris in a sports car with the warm wind in her hair". Later, parked at the side of the road, the women stand in silence to watch the dawn break, the fiery orange of the sun, the red ochre buttes and their matching scarlet hair in startling concert.

In clumsier hands the moment could sink into murky essentialism. But in *Thelma and Louise* the issue isn't woman as nature, but women in nature. Here, the female body is not a landscape to be mapped, a frontier under conquest. This is the liberated body, but, as well, the body of empathetic connection. In the absence of men, on the road *Thelma and Louise* create a paradigm of female friendship, produced out of their wilful refusal of the male world and its laws. No matter where their trip finally ends, *Thelma and Louise* have reinvented sisterhood for the American screen.

### Reviewing the road

Bloated and alcoholic, Jack Kerouac died a recluse nearly twenty years after he wrote his most famous book. So much for the giddy masculine promise of *On the Road*. Route 66 has been closed, Detroit all but shuttered. And these days the US government wages war for the oil that feeds its automotive addiction.

In *Thelma and Louise* the history of the American road movie is filtered through a revisionist lens. It's as if step-by-step, *Thelma and Louise* retrace the familiar routes, but with the will to pleasure, not power. Tired scenarios and clichéd landscapes alike are reinvented, resuscitated with fresh perspective and never-before-told lives. On this trip, when women drive, Oedipus spins out of control.

● *Thelma and Louise* opens in the UK on 12 July



'*Thelma and Louise*': girlfriends, guns and guts

# Ridley Scott's Road work

● Its high spirits and dazzling good looks notwithstanding, *Thelma and Louise* suggests that the situation of American women is dire indeed. When Louise (Susan Sarandon) comes to the rescue of Thelma (Geena Davis) and kills the man who's attempting to rape her, few in the audience feel that murder is unjustified. And when Louise rejects Thelma's suggestion that they go to the police with a despairing, "A hundred people saw you dancing cheek to cheek. Who's going to believe us? What kind of world do you live in?", we know she's probably right about that too.

Opening in the US on 24 May, one day after the Supreme Court handed down a decision barring employees of federally financed planning clinics from any discussion of abortion with their patients (thus drastically curtailing access for poor women to abortion), *Thelma and Louise* has turned out to be amazingly prescient. In a society which punishes women for their sexuality, women's reproductive freedom is as tenuous as their legal redress against crimes of rape and physical assault. David Souter, the recently appointed Supreme Court judge who cast the deciding vote in the family planning clinic case, wrote an opinion a few years ago against the complainant in a rape case characterising her behaviour as "provocative". Why should *Thelma and Louise* expect to be justly treated in his blame-the-victim court? What choice for them then except to become outlaws – and movie legends.

Ridley Scott, director and co-producer of *Thelma and Louise*, knows how important a test case it is for 'women-driven' material. The film has everything that's needed for a traditional box office success. Everything, that is, except a male protagonist.

The following is excerpted from a ninety minute interview with Scott just prior to *Thelma and Louise*'s US opening. At that point, the film was already showing signs of critical success. (It opened to enthusiastic reviews in both the local and national press.) Its commercial prospects were, however, far from settled. And Scott, while pleased to be regarded as something of an auteur (on the basis of *Blade Runner* and *Alien*), is careful to present himself as responsible Hollywood businessman, making movies for mainstream audiences.

Scott began his career at the BBC, first as an art director and then as director of *Z Cars*. He left after three years to form his own TV commercial production company. Twelve years later, he started directing feature films. He says that one result of having made thousands of commercials is that he doesn't

have to think about visuals – it just happens.

"I have a development group in Los Angeles. We have our net cast out for ideas. They can come from newspaper articles, from conversations, from books. Also, there's a snow storm of scripts, most interestingly from new writers. We met Callie Khouri and she presented this script [*Thelma and Louise*] and I loved it. At that moment I was involved in another large-scale project – only two or three weeks in, thank God. So I went through this odd process – which I'm going to have to go through sooner or later anyway because I'm curious about producing – of interviewing other directors for *Thelma and Louise*. The more I talked to them, the more possessive I became. Directing is partly a job to change things if they're wrong. But I felt the overall balance of the script shouldn't be tampered with – we did a bit of work with it, but basically it was all there. I felt so protective that I decided that I should direct it myself".

In that *Thelma and Louise* is driven by characters rather than events, it's a departure for Scott. Like his best films, however, it situates an allegorical narrative within a realistically detailed visual world. When one walks out of *Thelma and Louise*, one feels, as after *Blade Runner* and *Alien*, that one's been in a place one won't forget.

"It's a far less exotic world than *Alien*, although I tried to make the heartland look as exotic as possible. To us Europeans, it is. The scale of things is so vast. We can eulogise about roads with telegraph poles and Americans think we're crazy. I looked for days to find one. They don't actually exist very much any more, but they are very much part of what I believe is the American landscape. Oddly enough, I found it in Bakersfield (Southern California).

"When I started off on this project, I decided to take the actual journey that they take in the script because your educational process begins there. When I location hunt, I'm not just looking at locations: I'm meeting people, I'm hearing voices and accents. So the production designer and the location hunter and I drove the route. We started in Arkansas and drove to the Grand Canyon. I couldn't haul 149 people around for three minutes in Texas and four in Arkansas, but I had a brief education on what everything looked like. I felt I had to find

**I tried to make the heartland look as exotic as possible**



definitive examples of the landscape they passed through because it's allegorical and I felt that their journey, the last journey, should be part of the allegory. I felt it was better to lean to the vanishing face of America, which is Route 66, rather than the new face of America, which is malls and concrete strips".

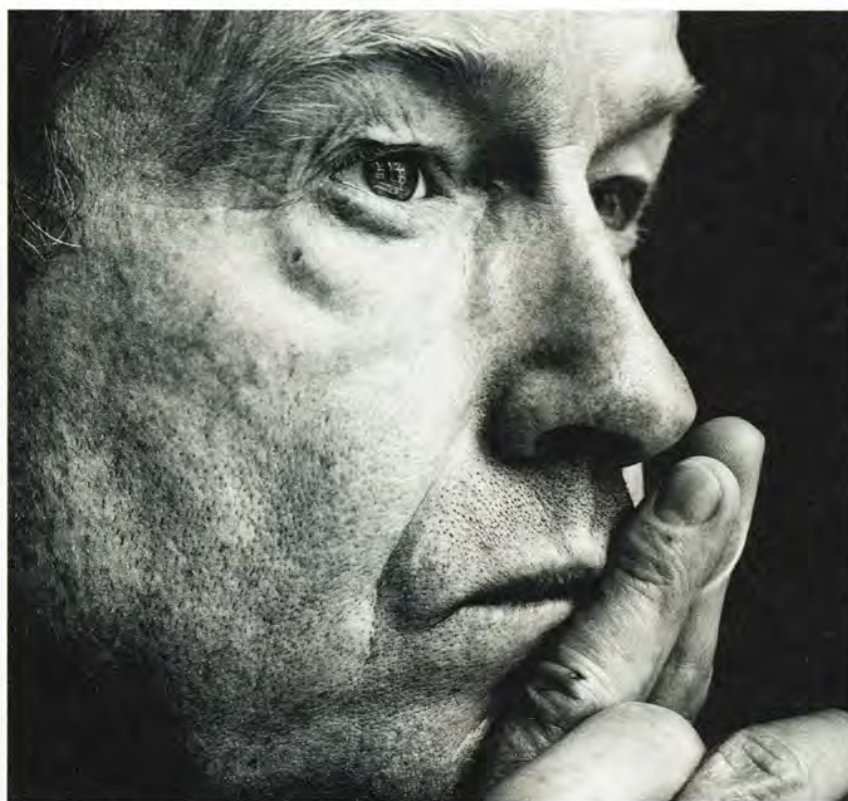
Although *Thelma and Louise* is obviously a Ridley Scott film, the clarity and wit of the script and sense of the irrepressible in Davis' and Sarandon's performances suggest a high degree of collaboration between director, actors and writer. It's clear from Scott's description of working with the actors that he realises just how crucial to the film their performances are.

"I spend a long time casting. Finally the casting process comes down to a gut decision. There are a lot of actors out there who will give you a good cold read and I used to be impressed by that, but then that's all you'd get, no surprises. I'm always hoping the actors I've cast are going to surprise me about where this character is going to go through the envelope – whether at that moment it's going to be maniacal, or funny, or subdued.

"There's always an element of taste involved in that, even if it's bad taste, and it's my job to adjust that – to be the barometer. But I want it to come out of them. Therefore, we talk a lot. We sit around the table with a script. I want to discuss their character and how they will function. The best sign is when the actor starts to get possessive about the role and says, 'Well I wouldn't do that', even if it's about how they dress. 'I wouldn't wear shoes like that'. Once that happens I know they are starting to key into who they are. Then we start reading. I never ask them to read with, to use a corny term, feeling. It's usually a flat read. Then they say, 'I can't say this, what I'd like to say is this', and I agree, unless it affects the drama or the humour. It becomes a partnership, so by the time we start doing the lines, we're very close to shooting.

"When we walk on the floor, we've usually already negotiated how the scene is going to go and I've already done a kind of down and dirty lighting job. Then we do an immediate rehearsal, but with them saving it – I don't want to see it [meaning the performance]. We walk around and make some chalk marks and fix the focus. Then I say, 'Do you feel comfortable?' It's not like everything's cast in stone. If it's wrong, it's wrong, and we do it again. Then they go off and get made up and they come back and we shoot.

"So there's this adrenalin, which I've found is really important. There's a spontaneity, and what I discovered



## The film's not about rape. It's about choices and freedom

is that both girls prefer it this way. Susan always used to laugh, and say, 'I'm the money actress. You don't see it until you say action and then you pay me'. I think there's nothing worse than when you rehearse, rehearse until every ounce of adrenalin is gone. That's when you end up with forty takes trying to make it look spontaneous. If we did five or six takes, it was a lot. Invariably if you've got the right people involved, you're going to start seeing it on the first or second take".

Not unlike Clint Eastwood, Scott has been dragged by his interest in strong women characters into some unpredictable political places. While *Thelma and Louise* is definitely a feminist film, Scott is no theoretician. And his conversation reveals a couple of contradictions that he hasn't thought through, much less resolved. He seems surprised, for example, when I object to his including the Sean Young character in *Blade Runner*, a robot whose sexuality is programmed by the Harrison Ford character, in his pantheon of strong women. He's similarly taken aback, although more than willing to hear me out, when I tell him that I, like many of the strong women I know, feel betrayed by the ending of *Thelma and Louise*.

Given that a handful of open-ended outlaw films already exist, why

should *Thelma and Louise* not have been allowed to live out their days in Mexico drinking margaritas? Or conversely – given that the temper of the times makes it not unlikely that women who defend themselves against rapists or otherwise defy the patriarchy are risking death – shouldn't we be forced to look at *Thelma and Louise's* bloody bodies at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, and thus to realise our complicity in their death.

Such a depressing ending, however, might have alienated precisely the audience that Scott claims he's trying to reach, and probably would have destroyed the film's chances at the box office. Instead, we get tragedy with an upbeat ending. Via the freeze frame, *Thelma and Louise* become legends without having to go through all the grisly stuff of dying. Scott disagrees.

"There's a price for everything", he counters, adding that this applies to men as well as women. "From the first moment of reading the script, I never had a second thought about the ending. It just seemed appropriate that they carry on the journey. It's a metaphorical continuation. The film's not about rape. It's about choices and freedom. The only solution is to take your choice which is to take your life".

Perhaps it's a measure of how radical the film is that no ending feels satisfactory. Along with rapists, condescending husbands, irresponsible boyfriends, thieving lovers, lecherous truckers, sadistic cops and paternalistic detectives, *Thelma and Louise* leaves narrative closure by the wayside.

## Filmography

Ridley Scott

born 1939, Tyne and Wear, England

### The Duellists

101 mins (1977)

**Alien** 117 mins (1979)

**Blade Runner**

117 mins (1982)

### Legend

94 mins (1985)

**Someone to Watch**

**Over Me**

106 mins (1987)

**Black Rain**

125 mins (1989)

**Thelma and Louise**

129 mins (1991)

### Selected Commercials

Benson & Hedges **Train** (1975)

Hovis **Bike Ride** (1978)

Hovis **Coronation Day** (1978)

Apple **1984** (1983)

Pepsi **Spaceship** (1984)

COI **Anti Heroin** (1985)

Barclays **Interview** (1986)

Colgate **Le Duel** (1989)

Chanel No.5

**Swimming Pool** (1990)

Scott is currently in production on *Christopher Columbus*, with Gérard Depardieu as the explorer. Scott's description of Columbus as "the first astronaut" might suggest a Hollywood pitch, though the film is in fact very much a European production.

"I find America terribly stimulating, but my home is in England. I cut and mixed *Thelma and Louise* in Pinewood. That's been my pattern with [post-producing] all my films. The journalist community in the UK criticises us for opting out. I haven't opted out, but there's no film industry in the UK. I simply go where I can make films – and not at such a mini-budget that it impedes what I want to do.

"The first film that really gonged me was David Lean's *Great Expectations*. But there's no point in making a movie if you don't have a market for it. Film is too expensive for that. It shouldn't be insular.

"I'm hoping that at some point in the near future Europe may open up. I'm hoping that will happen with *Columbus*. We've financed it by selling it territory by territory, like the independents have been doing for years – like Dino DeLaurentis. And then we came to the US for distribution.

"*Columbus* is going to be very unpopular. We're going to have every Indian society after us for racism. But his vision was very extreme – even more extreme than NASA's and more daunting. His crew believed he was going to sail to the edge of the world. The NASA people, at least, have their co-ordinates when they send up a mission." Amy Taubin



Commercials and pop promo directors have little status in the film world. Tim Kirby talks to Tony Kaye and John Maybury about moving into features. Portraits by Gino Sprio

# Pride and prejudice



**Relative values: do we devalue the images of Tony Kaye, right, because they are advertising? Left: Kaye's lost child in the city for Volkswagen cars and below, strange people on a train for British Rail's Inter-City**



"The thing I hate about advertising is the disrespect. My ambition is in three years time to be able to say I'm ashamed I was ever involved in it". There, as the slogan says, you have it: conclusive proof that the souls of advertising folk are a contradictory mess of resentment and self-loathing. The soul in this instance belongs to Tony Kaye, who, according to the ever-yacking advertising industry, is probably the most exciting commercials director around.

A former agency art director, Kaye marked his move into commercials in the early 80s with a series of disastrous self-promotional stunts that he has never been allowed to forget. Perhaps the most telling was a double page spread in the *Evening Standard* proclaiming Kaye to be "the most important British director since Alfred Hitchcock". Kaye was planning a follow-up involving the front cover of *Screen International* when his production company did him a favour by terminating his contract.

From being a laughing stock, Kaye has in little more than three years built a bankable reputation as a highly original, if occasionally profligate, maker of commercials. His award-winning ads for Solid Fuel (dog kisses cat kisses mouse), Inter-City (sepia tones, yawning pawn, 'exotic' casting) and Abbey National (cute kids, Lionel Bart, insidiously whistleable tune) have guaranteed a flow of prestigious and/or well-budgeted scripts at a time when his peers are having to fight over scraps.

And Kaye's reputation has spread beyond the narrow bounds of advertising. He was recently interviewed by Muriel Gray for an upcoming Channel 4 arts slot in which he will be brack-

eted with Peter Greenaway and David Byrne as "an artist who works in film".

Very gratifying, but not enough. Despite the plaudits, Kaye is still in advertising. From afar that may seem like an exciting enough place to be, but viewed from the inside, the ad industry is like a comfortable but mildly tedious world cruise: most people on board would rather be doing something else. Kaye is no exception, which is why he is about to jump ship.

In September, armed with little more than a showreel, an incomplete original screenplay and the conviction that his time has come, he is shifting his base of operations, along with his new family, to Los Angeles, there to await apotheosis in the form of what the ad industry touchingly refers to as a 'real film'. Kaye would claim to have few illusions about his likely reception. One thing he feels certain of bumping up against is the film industry's subtle but pervasive class system. Nurtured by tradition, snobbery, lazy thinking and paranoia, this imposes a hierarchy of critical value on all who work in film.

At the bottom, of course, are the makers of corporate videos and training films. Avoid at all cost. Pop promo directors are a few notches higher - touchable, maybe, but not kissable on both cheeks. The makers of commercials are a distinct merchant class. Acknowledge their impressive budgets with a firm handshake but don't linger. At the top are the aristocracy, the people who make 'real films'. Stick close and savour the odour of legitimacy.

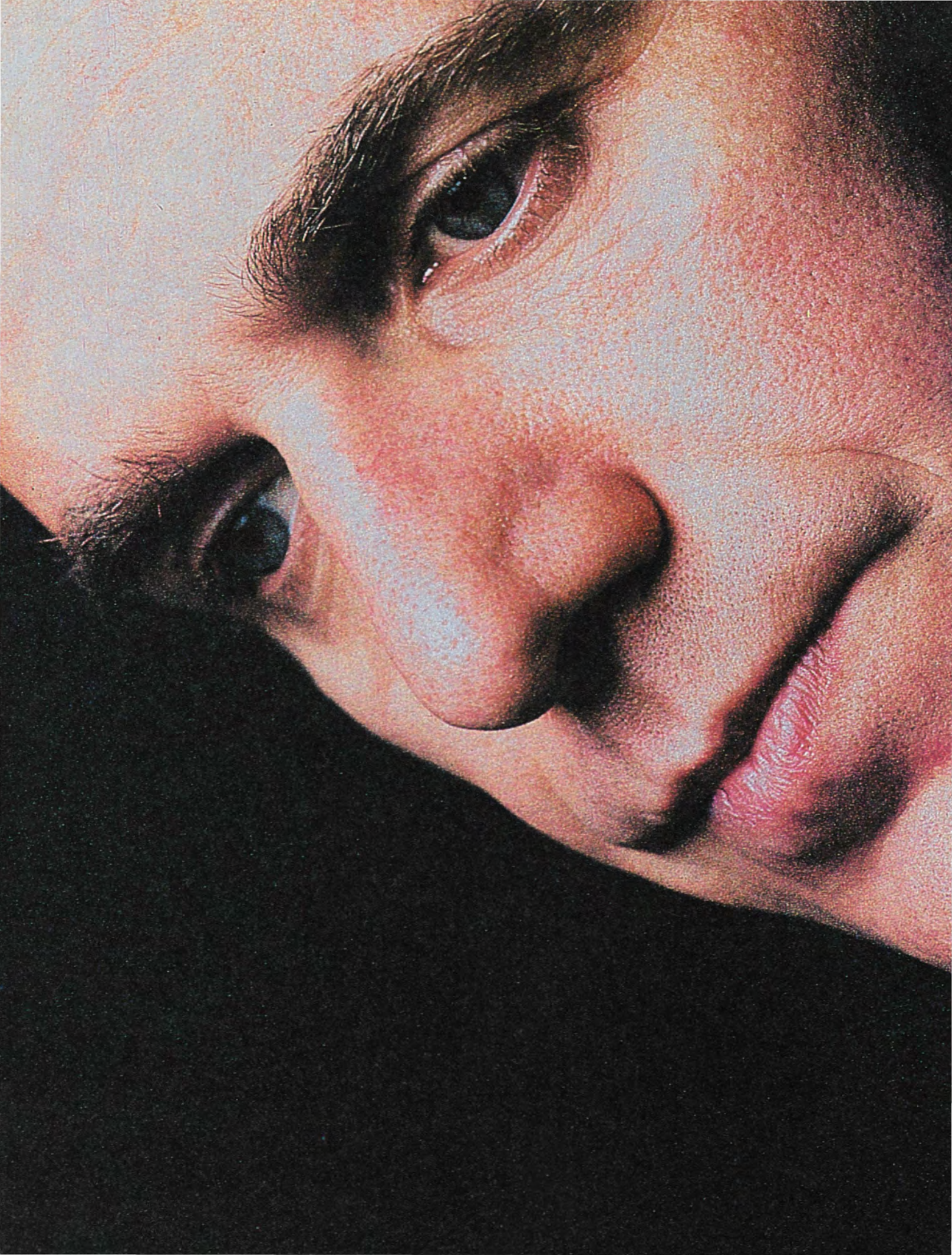
After a decade of cross-overs by former commercials directors - the Scott brothers, Alan

Parker, Adrian Lyne, Hugh Hudson - demarcation lines have become less defined. But in the minds of many studio bosses, ex-adman still translates as hired gun - an individual so desperate for an opportunity to prove something he'll shoot anything on anyone's terms (for example, Paul Weiland, who against his better judgment took on the doomed Bill Cosby vehicle, *Leonard Part VI*).

And as if that wasn't bad enough, every ex-adman is assumed to bear corporate responsibility for the reputation of all the ad-men who follow in his wake. In the US, Joe Pytko (best known in this country for his Apple Mac ads) is generally agreed to have blighted the aspirations of a generation of his fellows after a less than convincing debut feature, *Let it Ride*. British commercials directors are already contemplating Kaye's progress with misgivings verging on the paranoid. As one of them commented: "I just know he's going to fuck it up for the rest of us".

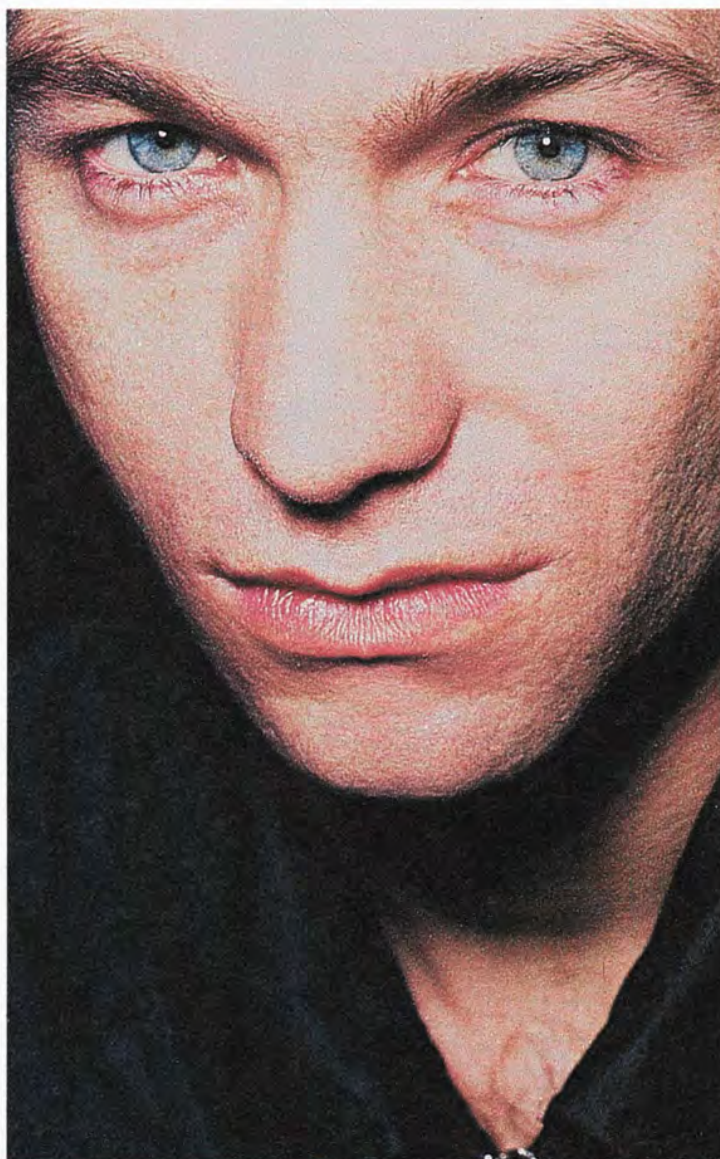
For the critics, the class system provides a ready-to-assemble kit of responses with which to decry the work of those who once shot soap powder for a living. US film professor Mark Crispin Miller had all parts of the kit on display in an extended piece that appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* (April '90) under the title 'Hollywood: The Ad'. Crispin Miller made the case that everything from product placement to Dolby sound was conspiring to reduce cinema to a display of "techniques that work directly on the nervous system". Central to the thesis was the malign influence of that "stellar group of professionals [who] migrated from the ad shops ►







**Musical class:**  
John Maybury, right, avant-garde filmmaker turned music video director. Below, multi-layered video for Neneh Cherry's 'Buffalo Stance', and far right, the award-winning promo for Sinéad O'Connor's 'Nothing Compares 2U'



Campaign: "I have directed two commercials in 26 years. It will be 26 years before I do another one". In the intervening period Loach has become something of a regular in the commercial break, with competent performances for the *Guardian*, Polycell and Tetley Bitter. Last time anyone bothered to ask, Loach was blaming his bank manager for his ever-expanding commercials showreel.

But pleading poverty is a banal justification. Peter Greenaway prefers to place his Philips commercials in a broader cultural context: "Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* could be said to be advertising for the Dutch Republic. The Sistine Chapel is the most extravagant advert for Roman Catholicism. All art is propaganda. You can't put up barriers between the two". And John Frankenheimer (Fiat, AT&T) favours the craftsman's argument: "To be able to do a commercial where you have to tell the story in two minutes was a great artistic triumph for me".

Ken Russell (Ross Frozen Foods) occupies the sort of ecumenical position that would have a fundamentalist like Crispin Miller reaching for the bible: "Today advertising's just something that's there. In the 60s people were completely brainwashed by it. But today there's a bit more



◀ of London to the studios of Hollywood, where they helped to alter modern cinema".

Crispin Miller doesn't like the films produced by this sinister "group of professionals", and he doesn't like them in a very particular way. Thus Tony Scott's *Top Gun* is not just a two-dimensional comic strip with flying sequences; it has to be "expert recruitment propaganda". And brother Ridley's *Blade Runner* is "brilliant", but also "a thriller designed as if by computer to stroke lonely women". It's not enough that these directors make bad films; they must be bad in a way that betrays the manipulative, vacuous values of their directors' alma mater.

So it is that even a director as assimilated as Ridley Scott finds himself having to stick up for the business that gave him a start. Speaking to *Direction* just before shooting *Thelma and Louise*, he said, not for the first time: "I'm grateful for what the commercials world has done for me and I won't hear anything against it. If a critic steps out of line on that I'll put them right. I won't back down on that".

Adrian Lyne, meanwhile, whose *Flashdance* and *9½ Weeks* are lambasted by Crispin Miller as "ad-like", attempts to suggest that the system that produces 'real films' is not qualitatively different from the one that produces ads: "Its



the same deal. No difference, except that the people I've met in agencies are generally brighter than the people I've met in studios".

While the former ad boys fight rearguard actions for having had the temerity to move up the hierarchy, the aristocracy has been devising ingenious justifications for moving in the other direction. To name all the 'legitimate' film directors who have dabbled in commercials is by now a very long list, stretching from Altman to Zeffirelli, with most of *Who's Who* of contemporary cinema in between.

But it wasn't all that long ago that shooting a commercial carried with it the fear of loss of status. As recently as 1986, Ken Loach, on completing his second commercial, insisted to

grit and imagination, a bit of fun that there never was before".

Looking down from the heights of the system, Russell can, of course, afford to be relaxed about advertising. For Tony Kaye, determined to fight his way up, the stigma can only be reduced by ritual self-flagellation coupled with a plea for his own undeniable talent.

"I'm totally aware of the shortcomings of where I'm coming from", he says, "and I agree with 90 per cent of what people say about commercials directors' films. So I'm concerned to make my first film in such a way that its content and not its coating is the most important factor. And at the same time I hope I will be able to photograph and cut the film in as innovative a way as I can".

Meanwhile, in another part of the forest, another ambition stirs. What you know about John Maybury will depend on your definition of a good time. If it is to attend experimental film festivals, then you will perhaps recognise him as the one behind those "dirge-like" (his words) impressionistic essays in Super-8 that were popular during the mid-80s. If, on the other hand, you treasure nothing more than a Saturday morning rendez-vous with *The Chart Show*, you'll know his classy music videos for



# Mixes

**Len Lye and Sophie Muller:**  
part of a hidden British  
tradition, says Mike O'Pray

In the shadow of that dismal sinking monolith, British cinema, British directors are busy producing the best pop video and TV commercials in the world. For energy, innovation and sheer creative dynamism, we are, by common consent, streets ahead (although Madonna at least competes). Why is this the case? Are there resources available to such film-makers that mainstream British cinema ignores, for whatever reasons? Certainly to watch adverts and pop promos is to be constantly surprised by how allusive and knowing they are about the resources of cinema.

The recent Ariston TV commercial of different characters repeatedly entering a room owed everything to Polish video artist Rybczynski's Oscar-winning 'Tango'. In a Public Safety ad, cyclists are recommended to wear helmets with a fast-cutting, coarsely shot montage straight from the Brakhage avant-garde aesthetic. And British Rail ads still rework the 1936 classic, 'Nightmail'.

In the pop promo world, to take just one example, Sophie Muller's work for Sinead O'Connor (the brilliantly edited concert film) and her mature handling of Annie Lennox's disturbing mix of feminism and sexual ambiguity in the Eurythmics' 'Savage' album video are undervalued as serious works because of their commercialism. Muller's sharp editing, expressionist *mise-en-scène* and visual flair are resonant with ideas drawn from a wide cultural sphere – from theatre, dance, avant-garde cinema and painting.

Ironically, it appears that it is contemporary commercial film-makers who often draw on the resources of high or avant-garde art. But there is a precedent for this in the work of the early documentarists who made commercials for the Gas Board, the GPO and others.

Alberto Cavalcanti, who made the classic experimental documentary

'Coalface' in 1935, had worked in French avant-garde cinema for years. Humphrey Jennings, whose best work such as 'Diary for Timothy' was war propaganda for the Crown Film Unit, was in his early years a Surrealist painter. William Coldstream, who directed the delightful surreal musical instruction film on how to use the phone properly, 'The Fairy of the Phone' (1936), was a leading painter of the Euston Road School and later head of the Slade. Len Lye, who made animated commercials in the 30s for Shell Motor Oil ('Birth of a Robot', 1936), Imperial Airways ('Colour Flight', 1938) and the GPO, was a talented painter from New Zealand. His use of hand-painting on the film strip and his print techniques using gasparcolour were innovative. His talent so impressed John Grierson that he allowed his name to appear on the credits for 'Trade Tattoo' – perhaps Lye's best work, made in 1937 to laud the virtues of posting early.

Clearly, then, a relish for the relationship between the visual arts and film binds together such commercial directors with today's ad-makers and pop promo makers – and also with film-makers as various as Derek Jarman, Peter Greenaway and Isaac Julien.

It is remarkable how many British film-makers have art school backgrounds. Jarman studied art at the Slade and Greenaway at Walthamstow; pop promo artist John Maybury studied fine art at North-East London Polytechnic and Sophie Muller was at the Royal College of Art. Mike Leigh, Philip Ridley, Sally Potter, Ken McMullen and Ken Russell are just a few of the other film-makers who were educated in art schools.

Ironically (and with what sweet irony) as the British film industry sinks, it is this



Len Lye's 'Trade Tattoo', 1937

once 'lunatic fringe' that is becoming the mainstream itself. Jarman is finishing 'Edward II'; Greenaway's 'Prospero's Books' opens later this year; Isaac Julien's 'Young Soul Rebels' recently won a prize at Cannes. But the survival of these film-makers in such an inhospitable climate should come as no surprise. Coming out of the art schools they know that money is scarce. Jarman and Greenaway were making films on shoestring budgets long before the 'British boom' – and even now they work on low budgets. And I believe they would make one-minute Super-8s if they had to. Jarman did for years.

But have art schools had their due as sources of British film? When 'Screen International' did its run-down earlier this year on British film schools, only three got special treatment – the National Film School, London International Film School and the Royal College of Art. This is despite the fact that there are some fifty other educational institutions offering practical film studies.

Of course, many of these are art schools or polytechnics. Unlike the film schools they do not provide full-time specialisation in film skills. But what they do offer is at least equally important: a broad creative environment in which experimentation is nurtured – despite the fact that ten years of Tory rule has inevitably taken its toll.

To make film alongside sculpture, painting, video art, printmaking and photography seems to have produced at least as much talent as the film schools. In fact, it could be claimed that if there is a British film tradition, it is a hybrid one, something of a Caliban in that it is the unpredictable outcome of promiscuous couplings – between poetry and theatre and music hall and opera and underground movies and TV advertising and paintings and comics and video art and cinema.

Such talents do not fit easily into the narrow-minded orthodoxies of either Wardour Street or 'Screen' magazine. But like Caliban, the awkward case, the poetry is reserved for them.

Neneh Cherry, Boy George and Sinead O'Connor, including her remarkable 'Nothing Compares 2U', which picked up a mantlepiece-full of MTV and Grammy awards last year.

Later this year, Maybury starts shooting a seventy-five minute screen version of Manfred Karge's *Man to Man*, with Tilda Swinton recreating her stage role. A 'real film' in the can will go some way to resolving the confusion about Maybury's place in the class system.

Maybury himself says: "As far as I'm concerned, film-making is film-making. Of course a film is a more substantial piece of work than a music video and so your commitment is more substantial, but a music video is still three minutes of film. However, I'm well aware that there are plenty of people who don't see it that way."

"In fact, I usually get problems from both directions. The music industry is suspicious of me because they think I'm too arty. On the other hand, I know that the Arts Council turned down an application last year because I was 'too well known', and by that they meant I was making a lot of promos."

The handful of promo directors who have blazed the trail into 'real films' has left few useful markers for a director like Maybury. Given his experimental films, the quality of his promo work, plus credits on three Derek Jarman movies, it was never likely that his first feature would be a *Highlander* or a *Ninja Turtle*. However, it wasn't for want of offers.

"I was actually asked to do a big budget dance movie last year, a sort of acid house *Saturday Night Fever*", Maybury says. "They obviously knew enough about me to say 'You can do whatever you want, you can make it a Godard movie'. But I thought, this is exactly the sort of first film that a promo director is expected to do, why fall into the trap?"

If Maybury sounds bullish, this is largely due to his earlier incarnation as an experimental film-maker, the holy fools of the system. "I was a snob about promos too, and for a long time I turned them down on principle. Then I got realistic. Avant-garde film critics find this conversion ironic because in the early 80s my work was particularly concerned with the confusion of TV images. For me to end up producing the raw material of that confusion is definitely ironic."

"But as I discovered very quickly, doing promos means getting to work with great cameramen and editors and genius post-production. I learned about film-making in a way that I could never have done when it was just me, a 16mm camera and two or three people from the film co-op."

Like Kaye, Maybury expects no favours when his debut feature appears. Unlike Kaye, he's more inclined to demand the right to a fair trial. "A bad promo director will make a bad film and a bad commercials director will make a bad film", he says. "But it doesn't follow that all promo directors and all commercials directors make bad films."

In other words, if you decide you don't like the films that Kaye and Maybury produce, be sure it's for the right reasons.



Alan Bleasdale is a big fan of the novel *Catch-22*, which he describes as “the Bible of twentieth-century literature, really”. And in his epic new screenplay for Channel 4, *GBH* – a series charting the treacherous brain fevers of Britain in the 80s – the Liverpool writer has come up with a pivotal kind of *Catch-22* of his own.

The story goes something like this. A goon squad of far right agents provocateurs fear that the far left is plotting a revolution – or would be, if they weren’t so disordered and ineffectual. So they have to be infiltrated by the goon squad, who behave like rampaging thugs under the false cloak of leftism. This way, you get a proto-revolution – and a justification for the right wing goon squad to behave like rampaging thugs. It’s a kind of Keynesian make-work principle applied to the political dirty tricks business: you get people to dig cesspits in order to fill them up with the bodies of the people you got to dig the cesspits.

Somehow, though, Bleasdale’s catch doesn’t have quite the same gyroscopic poise as Heller’s original. We’re meant to take it a little too seriously, a little too literally. Heller’s short-circuiting of language, truth and logic created a hermetically sealed realm of madness into which what we might regard as common sense had no hope of penetrating. It seemed a wonderful metaphor for so many of the mass delusions and double binds of the twentieth century – not least the Cold War. Bleasdale’s *Catch-91* lacks the same hideous, surreal geometry and metaphorical power: in *GBH*, common sense keeps seeping in to reassure us that the craziness isn’t all-embracing.

In seven, ninety minute episodes, *GBH* follows the fortunes of two men,

one near the heart of the political machinations described above, the other more tangentially affected.

Michael Murray (Robert Lindsay) is a left-fascist council leader – a megalomaniacal militant steeped in venality – in a northern city. His cretinous side-men take over the levers of public administration and his flying pickets halt funerals and school lessons in a syndicalist day of protest against the allegedly smug and elitist national parliament. (We don’t see the national parliament in action, so can’t tell whether Murray has any sort of point.)

#### Mania and depression

Jim Nelson (Michael Palin) is a remedial teacher, as Bleasdale once was, as well as being a chronic hypochondriac, a lover of Duke Ellington and the bearer of an FA coaching certificate – details which also appear in the Bleasdale biography. Nelson starts out as a lovable neurotic with humanitarian-socialist principles, a stalwart wife (Dearbhla Molloy) and a wonderful way with kids. He runs foul of Murray when he inadvertently carries on teaching during a planned day of action, and the local potentate vows to destroy him when Nelson pluckily refuses to perform ritual self-criticism.

The pair have one or two snarling face-offs, but for much of the series they spook one another from a distance. Both have mental collapses, gripped by sudden interior terrors.

Nelson beetles off on an accident-prone family holiday, where he variously hallucinates, exposes himself, goes ape-shit or plunges into catatonia, while sparring with a holy fool hotel proprietor, played by Daniel Massey.

Murray becomes a pratfalling, jactitating wreck, cozened into undertak-

Despite his exuberant ferocity, in ‘*GBH*’ Alan Bleasdale is still fond of the lectern, argues James Saynor

# Clogging corruption







ing ever more militant stunts by the goon squad while also tangling with the ghost of a vengeful female from his far distant past, a *Planet of the Apes* press man, an MI5 *femme fatale* (Lindsay Duncan), his harried wife, not to mention – in a brilliant sequence of sustained hysteria set in a hotel – a set of revellers in *Doctor Who* garb.

In both men, mania and depression, extroversion and introversion, courage and cowardice, generosity and savage self-centredness implode to create a Hellerish form of derangement in which our original sympathies with the characters are shaken up. In fact, if anything, we start to identify more with Murray.

It takes a while for the saga to lift off into these febrile areas, and Bleasdale only half abandons the tarmac of familiar TV realism for more expressionist realms. As he explains: "I think I always want to start from a basis of mere naturalism and then take it on from there. Even in *Boys from the Blackstuff*, the ending wasn't really naturalistic. When they were all in the pub in the final episode and the man comes through the window – I suppose I've always wanted to reach that level; that's the kind of writing that interests me. But I always feel I need to start from a solid basis, so I can develop from there. It's possibly to help myself, but I think it's also to help the people who are watching". Bleasdale says that in writing *GBH* he was "terrified" of reaching the more stylised stuff "without that bedrock".

#### Unwieldy giants

In any case, the heebie-jeebies afflict Murray and Nelson subside towards their final showdown, in part thanks to the ministrings of women-folk. Their madness provides a disturbing and often hilarious interlude, but when Michael Palin wanders naked through a field or Robert Lindsay impersonates Quasimodo, it doesn't connect up satisfactorily with the madness of the political power plays at the heart of the drama. Nelson and Murray may be foregrounded, but they're really just pawns tossed on a sea of darkness – and we barely begin to see what that darkness might consist of because the goon squad members remain villainous cyphers.

As a tele-novel, *GBH* shares several characteristics with other examples of

the genre that have appeared over the past couple of decades – *Edge of Darkness* (1985), Dennis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven* (1978) and *The Singing Detective* (1986), or Bleasdale's own *Boys from the Blackstuff* (1982). These series often have unwieldy structures, sometimes stapling the domestic and political together in unusual ways.

Thus Troy Kennedy-Martin started *Edge of Darkness* as a piece about bereavement before careering off in the direction of a techno-thriller. Likewise, Bleasdale originally planned his latest epic as a reflection on the horrors of the Great British Holiday – hence *GBH* – before being seduced by more public themes. (Last year's tele-novel *Die Kinder* followed a similar path to the screen.)

The above projects also have an uneasy relationship with naturalism, forever threatening to leapfrog out of 'objective' storytelling into more dislocated realms – a quality that makes the British tele-novel a particularly rich form. In *GBH*, though, Bleasdale seems determined to keep a firm grip on the "bedrock" of naturalism, with the result that his didactic propensities stifle his expressionist ones.

Sermonising, in fact, clogs *GBH* from the start. Early on, Nelson tells Murray: "Don't ever, ever claim that what you're doing has anything at all to do with socialism". And later, even as he's going to pieces, he stoutly declares: "I wanna fight... I've seen it all before. People are getting damaged, values are getting destroyed". In the final episode he delivers a long and resounding summation of the series' governing ideology to a Labour Party meeting: "We have to behave with dignity and honour, and above all without corruption... Socialism is the



Megalomaniacal militant Murray, left, and lovable neurotic Nelson, above

redistribution, not only of wealth, but of care and concern and equality and decency and belief in humankind".

Even the dippy hotelier drops into lucidity to help frame the issues: "I hate what we've become – having mistaken freedom for licence... Tell me, Mr Nelson, why should the dregs of our unfair society act in a caring and decent manner, when our self-seeking so-called leaders don't even care about fairness and freedom?"

Meanwhile, Murray himself has undergone his own conversion to humanism, arguing for interracial tolerance and concluding: "I'm a hypocrite, I'm a liar – I've been associated with evil, terrible things".

#### Bottling ferocity

These characters function more as stagey mouthpieces for homilies about fairness and freedom than embodiments of any of the delirium of the 80s – in the way, for example, that the rumbustious CIA operative, Darius Jedburgh (Joe Don Baker), seemed to be a walking metaphor for nuclear insanity in *Edge of Darkness*. Here, there was no need for statements of intent to unlock the meanings of the series as you seem to need in *GBH*.

Likewise in a Dennis Potter work, it's the total disposition of things that expresses the inner ideas of the piece, often within an almost wholly non-objective, hallucinatory realm, mapping out in a very abstract way the bizarre landscape of the author's mind. *GBH*, though written with style and ferocity, doesn't operate on such a sophisticated allusive level. It doesn't bottle the pernicious *Zeitgeist* of the 80s and then release its essence through the transforming actions of a single character or set of compelling circumstances. At its centre is a debating society exchange rather than any dramatic enactment of those ideas.

Bleasdale, at perhaps a mid-point in his career, is one of the great tele-novelists of our time, but – in banking away from naturalism – he hasn't yet written *The Tempest* or *The Singing Detective*. For all its scintillant dialogue and narrative complexity, *GBH* seems to communicate to us too much from an easily identifiable, social realist lectern, instead of from some impalpable nowhere and everywhere, like much of the best in art. Bleasdale has still to discover his own, true Catch-22.



Berenice Reynaud watches as the story of a new film by the director of 'Ju Dou' unfolds within the quiet of a feudal mansion

# China on the set with Zhang Yimou



December 1990. At an hour and a half's flight from Beijing, Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi province, is a large industrial city in the centre of a flat, arid plain, where coal mines are the main source of wealth. With sub-zero temperatures outside, people in the hotel dining-room keep their coats on; only the 'luxury rooms' are provided with heat.

Witnesses of a film co-production between Taiwan and mainland China – Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern* – we are the guests of Chiu Fu-sheng, president of ERA International, a young millionaire who made his fortune in video distribution. I had met him in 1989 in Taipei, on the crest of the success of Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A City of Sadness*, which he had produced. Awarded the Golden Lion in Venice, the film was doing extremely well in Taiwan, where the lifting of martial law in 1987 had made it possible for the first time to show previously taboo aspects of the island's history on screen.

At the time, Chiu's goal was to revitalise Taiwanese cinema through more efficient methods of production and aggressive marketing techniques. "I knew that *A City of Sadness* would get a better box office in Taiwan than abroad. If I spent so much money on its international publicity, it was simply to build Hou's reputation abroad". Now Chiu is thinking in even more international terms, in a way which could have a tremendous impact on the future of Chinese cinema.

Like many Taiwanese businessmen, Chiu has made several trips to mainland China since 1987. Once the first reactions of horror had subsided, Taiwanese investments in mainland China didn't significantly decrease following the events of Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. Economically, the two countries have become increasingly interdependent: Taiwan needs a market for the manufactured products of its 'economic miracle'; the People's Republic needs Taiwanese imports.

But legally, the Taiwanese are prohibited from doing business in the mainland. Fortunately there is a convenient third party: Hong Kong, a place of transit for everything that can be sold. Hong Kong cinema, a mixture of aggressive entrepreneurship, crass commercialism and brilliant creativity, is widely exported throughout South-East Asia. 'Leftist' companies such as a Sil-Metropole channel the money between the colony and the mainland and organise co-productions. Founded in 1977, the Hong Kong film festival has programmed many films by a group known as the 'Fifth Generation', which have attracted the attention of the West. After the long, quasi-fatal slumber of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese cinema has been revived and has become exportable.

In 1988 Chen Kaige's *King of the Children*, produced, like many Fifth Generation films, by Wu Tianming at the Xi'an Film Studio, was awarded the Golden Alarm-Clock Award at Cannes – as a joke. Lacking a sense of humour, China's Film Bureau started an 'anti-bourgeois campaign' and imposed financial restrictions on the studio. Yet even after the events of June 1989, the bureau continued to encourage for-



eign investment and co-productions, sometimes with paradoxical results. For example, Zhang Yimou's second film, *Ju Dou* (1990), co-produced by a Japanese company, is still banned in China, as now is *Raise the Red Lantern*. So another component of China's current cultural dilemma is that the Fifth Generation films – acutely, even painfully, Chinese – are eventually financed, produced and screened in a distant space: in Japan or Western countries.

## Perfect location

But there is more than economic convenience behind the links between Taiwan and the mainland. A sizeable part of the island's population came from the mainland in 1949 – not just Kuomintang cadres, but minor bank and government officials who followed orders, city dwellers afraid of communism, peasants enlisted in the Nationalist army. They left behind families, homes, memories and regrets. Their children – the generation of Chiu, Hou and Edward Yang – grew up confused between the vindictive nationalism of the 50s, the American pop culture of the 60s and the diplomatic blows of the 70s as the attitude of the West towards mainland China softened.

Mainland films are still banned in Taiwan, but can be found on video in every street market. Chiu soon discovered the Fifth Generation film-makers, in particular Zhang Yimou, whose directorial debut, *Red Sorghum*, won the Golden Bear at Berlin in 1988. Chiu Fu-sheng, Zhang Yimou and Hou Hsiao-hsien had met at film festivals over the years and had become friends. In





**Enclosure: sensuous light and a red lantern bathe Gong Li, left, who plays the central figure, a woman who suffers and revolts, in 'Raise the Red Lantern', a new film by Zhang Yimou, far left**

February 1990, in Tokyo, Zhang gave Chiu 'Wives and Concubines', a short story by a contemporary young writer, Su Tong. Chiu then asked Hou to work as a script consultant on the project. A Hong Kong branch of ERA International was created to channel money; the co-production department of the Film Bureau in Beijing was contacted; equipment was rented from Hong Kong; post-production facilities were booked in Tokyo. Meanwhile, Zhang scouted China, looking for the perfect location.

Like many writers of his generation, Su finds it safer to set his narratives in a pre-revolutionary past. 'Wives and Concubines' is about a young woman, Songlian, who becomes the fourth wife of an old master. The story unravels in the family compound, where each wife has her own pavilion. A red lantern at the door (giving the film its title) means that the master has decided to spend the night with that wife.

### Private pleasures

In the eighteenth-century mansion, located an hour's drive from Taiyuan, shooting starts early. Everybody wears green: to fight the cold the production office has rented a supply of cotton-padded army coats. Made of a dozen buildings and intricate courtyards surrounded by a wall, the compound has been divided into dwelling units for the local peasants. Pigs, dogs and chickens run in the courtyards, clothes are hanging out to dry. Some buildings have been turned into a small museum.

Courtyard houses, or *sanheyuan*, are a perfect example of classical Chinese architecture.

Their way of outlining and occupying space is an expression of complex social rules and they embody a certain domestic utopia. Everything a human being needs could be found inside the compound, especially for rich families who had live-in servants and the resources to bring in entertainment, such as theatre troupes, from outside. (Beijing's Forbidden City is the ultimate form of *sanheyuan*: awesome, gigantic and imperial.) The enclosing wall, beyond which the women would never venture, protected against the hardships of the outside world. Within its limits, private dreams and pleasures – the writing of poetry, the love of women, the study of Confucian philosophy – could be pursued in celestial peace.

But one person's utopia can be another's nightmare. The *sanheyuan* expressed a highly repressive patriarchal social set-up, in which the master had power of life and death over his household. Centred on the character of Songlian, played by Zhang's 'muse', Gong Li, *Raise the Red Lantern* – like other of Zhang's films in which the Gong Li persona is the central focus – would have been termed a 'women's picture' in 40s Hollywood. But Zhang doesn't define his films in terms of sexual politics. The setting of the story in a feudal mansion in the 20s, the sufferings and revolt of a female character, have a metaphoric value. Here Zhang is markedly vague, saying only that "beyond the relationships among the characters I want to show the deep humanity of Chinese culture and society".

Zhang Yimou's father and two uncles gradu-

ated from the Kuomintang military academy. One uncle was killed by a warlord, the other emigrated to Taiwan after 1949. Zhang's father stayed in the mainland out of filial duty, and was more or less assigned to residence. It was Zhang's mother, a dermatologist, who supported the family.

During the Cultural Revolution Zhang was sent to a textile factory because of his 'background'. Work was not only hard, but dangerous too: you might lose your finger. To escape hardship, he offered to draw hundreds of portraits of Chairman Mao for his cultural unit. At the same time, having sold his blood to buy a camera, he was taking pictures.

In 1978 Zhang read that the Beijing Film Academy was reopening. He sent them a portfolio, but his application was rejected because at twenty-eight he was beyond the age limit. He then wrote to the Minister of Culture, who was impressed by his photographic work and granted his request.

In film school Zhang discovered a new world: Feuillade's *Fantomas*, the French New Wave, Japanese cinema. Among his classmates were Chen Kaige, whose *Yellow Earth* (1983) and *The Big Parade* (1985) he later shot, and Zhao Fei, who having shot Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Horse Thief* (1987) and Li Lianying, *The Imperial Eunuch* (1990), is now his DP in *Raise the Red Lantern*. But Zhang wanted to direct, and veteran director Wu Tianming promised to give him a chance provided that he shot *Old Well* (1987) for him. Zhang ended up playing the male lead as well, launching a successful side career as an actor.

### Space and time

The equipment used in *Raise the Red Lantern* is more sophisticated than in a standard mainland production. A gaffer, Johnny, was brought in from Hong Kong, a video control monitor is on the set (occasionally used to watch a football game during a break) and, rare occurrence, the film is shot in sync sound.

Art director Zhao Jiuping has filled the pavilion of Songlian with real antiques from the 20s: vases, a heavy carved mirror, scrolls, tapestries and an authentic gramophone on which, lost in her thoughts, the young woman listens to an opera recording by the third wife, since then suspected of adultery and killed. Zhang and Zhao have bathed the place in a sensuous light, enhancing the effect of the red lanterns that hang everywhere. Rumour has it that Zhang and Gong Li are lovers – and they are, indeed, a glamorous couple. But on the set professionalism reigns. Zhang composes and rehearses his shots in an obsessional way; Gong withdraws into a sex goddess's narcissistic solitude.

A sense of space, of ritual, of utopia has generated religious, political and domestic architecture in China. This helps me understand why the best Chinese films start with the exploration of a specific space, which is simultaneously landscape, culture and metaphysics. The strength of Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (the starting point of the Fifth Generation) was its ►



◀ vision of the natural and social landscape in the poorest areas of Shanxi province. And I wasn't surprised to hear that when Tian Zhuangzhuang accepted to direct *Li Lianying*, what got him interested in the project was a long walk he took one hot summer's night inside the walls of the Forbidden City.

My trip ends in Taiwan, where meetings have been arranged for me with Chiu Fu-sheng and Hou Hsiao-hsien. The latter – credited 'executive producer' for his work on the screenplay of *Raise the Red Lantern* – receives me in his headquarters, a traditional tea house, decorated with potteries and scrolls, where most of his screenplays are written. Hou's cinema is a highly collaborative process and involves endless discussions with friends until the small hours. This is how the repressed history of Taiwan has been kept, communicated, exchanged (most of Hou's films are compilations of true stories of people he knows).

In 1986, to play the grandfather in *Dust in the Wind*, Hou cast the eighty-two-year-old Li Tien-lu. This was Li's first cinematic role (he went on to appear in *Daughter of the Nile* and *A City of Sadness*), but he is an internationally known master puppeteer and a 'Taiwanese national treasure'. Hou's new project, *In the Hands of a Puppet Master* – also produced by ERA International – will tell Li's story from his birth in 1910 until 1945, the end of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. Hou wants to shoot the film in mainland China's Fujian province, whose landscape is very similar to that of Taiwan but less industrialised, and will go to Japan for administrative buildings that no longer exist in Taiwan.

### Uncertain identities

A similar search had delayed the shooting of Edward Yang's new film, *A Brighter Summer Day*, still in production during my visit. A former engineer who has spent eleven years in the US, Yang is concerned with alienation, displacement, uncertain identities. His *Taipei Story* was a "love song" to a city he had left and found again, but which is losing its soul through rapid Westernisation. "I had first picked the locations, the buildings, before thinking of the texture, the details, and finally the characters of the story", says Yang. His creative process was slightly different in *A Brighter Summer Day* and the film is being produced through his own company, Yang and Gang, and filmed in a multiplicity of locations. But the production itself is embedded in a poetics of space.

Sites and buildings have been destroyed in the three Chinas – in the mainland, during the Cultural Revolution; in Hong Kong, through non-stop real estate development; in Taiwan, through swift social change. Space is subtly taken away from those who inhabit it, to be redistributed according to new rules. What disappears in the process is the possibility to remember, to give expression to hidden wounds. Yet cinema has the power to capture, deconstruct, magnify space during the fleeting duration of an image. Maybe it is one of its functions in contemporary China: to give back space to those who have lost it.

The minister is tightening his grip on Chinese film, reports Tony Rayns

## Screening China

● It's always a mistake to take a narrow, short-term view of any matter relating to China's Communist government. Policies come and go as the political careers of their proponents wax and wane, and the unending power struggles within the Politburo rarely have immediate and visible effects.

Right now, in the wake of the Beijing massacre of 4 June 1989, the gap between government and people is uncommonly wide. The government pretends that everything is "stable" and calls for a return to Maoist values and principles; the people ignore their government. The only individuals who are vulnerable to government pressures in this situation are those who need to function in a public arena – like film-makers and other artists. They are getting it in the neck. The pressures on them will last no longer than the pitiable bureaucrats who are doing the pressing, but that's no consolation to anyone in the short term.

The senior bureaucrat currently responsible for China's cinema is Ai Zhisheng, Minister for Radio, Film and Television. Since March, he has been aided in his campaign against "bourgeois liberal" tendencies in the film industry by a Vice-Minister with special responsibility for film: one Tian Congming, whose training for the job included stints in the 'autonomous regions' of Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

Under them stands the Film Bureau, currently headed by Teng Jinxian, former director of the Emei Film Studio in Sichuan. And under the Film Bureau stand the heads of the country's fourteen major film studios, who decide which films to make and vet the results before sending them to Beijing for censorship. This pyramid structure amounts to an effective system of control.

Minister Ai (who has no known knowledge of or enthusiasm for cinema) was appointed to his post by ex-Politburo member Hu Qili, who fell from power along with Zhao Ziyang after the events of June 1989. The fall of Hu Qili evidently left Minister Ai with his back unprotected.

It is doubtless impertinent to speculate about the minister's actions without asking him to explain himself, but it seems clear to an outsider that his various bans and acts of interference in creative matters are designed first and foremost to safeguard his own position. The minister is clearly anxious to avoid any possible accusation of ideological laxity. In his zeal to promote a Maoist hard line, he is effortlessly

making China look ridiculous in the eyes of the international film world.

Recent months have seen a series of increasingly absurd and tunnel-visioned decisions from the ministry. First, there was the unexplained withdrawal of Wu Ziniu's film *The Big Mill* from competition in the Berlin and Singapore film festivals; the film is a China-Hong Kong co-production, but the Hong Kong producer Ma Fung-Kwok was given no say in the matter. Then there was the ham-fisted attempt to get Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou* withdrawn from consideration for the Oscar for the Best Foreign Film; when this succeeded in provoking a massive counter-attack from the Directors Guild (a *New York Times* article signed by Steven Spielberg and Kathleen Kennedy, a letter of protest signed by Woody Allen, Oliver Stone, Martin Scorsese *et al.*), the minister forced Teng Jinxian and Hu Jian of the China Film Corporation to make self-criticisms for exposing China to embarrassment.

Despite the setback over *Ju Dou*, Minister Ai continues to exercise his political muscle. He brought sustained pressure on Du Youling, the Taiwanese producer of Ann Hui's *My American Grandson*, to cut the film before allowing it to be screened anywhere – despite the fact that China has no financial interest in the film and contributed nothing to it but location facilities in Shanghai. He has also turned his sights on Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern*, banning it in China and threatening to disrupt its overseas distribution. Meanwhile the list of banned domestic productions grows by the week: Li Shaohong's *Bloody Morning*, Zhou Xiaowen's *Black Mountain Road*, Zhang Yuan's *Mama*, Xia Gang's *Half Flame, Half Brine*, Zhang Liang's *A Woman's Street...* Even the children's film *Childhood in Ruijin* is now banned, allegedly because the inhabitants of Ruijin claim that it shows them to be "backward".

The latest developments appear to end the one production possibility that represented a ray of hope for China's beleaguered film-makers: the possibility of finding financial support outside China. There have been co-productions between China and Hong Kong for many years, but the Hong Kong companies involved have always been pro-China enterprises – hence, easily kept in line politically. The 80s saw China opening up as a location for non-Chinese productions like Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* and Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*. But the last two years have seen an entirely new phenomenon: the making of purely Chinese films with non-Chinese backing.

The first such was Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou*, wholly financed by Japan's Tokuma Group. This was followed by Chen Kaige's *Life on a String* (produced by Don Ranvaud, a Briton, with principal finance from the UK, Japan and Germany) and Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern*. All three have been post-produced outside

## The list of banned domestic productions grows by the week





**Under threat: Zhou Xiaowen's 'Black Mountain Road', the object of the minister's harsh disapproval**

China, which has put their original negatives beyond the reach of Minister Ai. He can ban Zhang Yimou's films in China, but he could do little to impede their international circulation. It is this loophole that is now to be closed.

Of course, Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou are exceptional in that their relatively high profile internationally has given them access to financial backing from overseas. Most of their friends and contemporaries in China have no choice but to struggle on as best they can under Minister Ai's thumb.

A few have voted with their feet. Wu Tianming, erstwhile head of Xi'an Film Studio and 'godfather' to the Chinese new wave, is raising the backing for a low-budget independent feature in San Francisco; Peng Xiaolian (whose film about the writer Ba Jin was cancelled in mid-production after the 1989 massacre) is studying in New York; Huang Jianxin, director of *The Black Cannon Incident*, is researching in Australia; and Zhang Zeming, director of *Swan Song*, is living in London. Whether these people turn out to be exiles or merely short-term emigrés, they are now in exactly the same position as other independent film-makers in their host countries: fighting for a share of a diminishing financial pie. A growing number of emigré Chinese film students are also in this position: Zhang Tielin in London, Dai Sijie in Paris and many others.

China's Fifth Generation directors (basically, the class that graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982, plus others of a similar age and orientation) came in for a disproportionate amount of attention from the Film Bureau from the moment they began making films – despite the fact that much of their work was barely distributed in China itself.

The Chinese Communist Party is not the only authoritarian regime in the world that

devotes more energy to harassing its cutting-edge artists than it does to tackling larger and vastly more far-reaching political and economic woes. (In China, those woes include the bankruptcy of the film studios, the antiquated distribution system and the massive rise of video piracy.) But China's authorities have been particularly perverse in giving a hard time to the very film-makers who have done most to boost China's image in foreign eyes.

Minister Ai's record in this respect has been exactly what one would expect from a Communist Party apparatchik. He has taken no action whatsoever against the 100-odd mediocre commercial movies released since the massacre, but has systematically jumped on anything that displays glimmers of creativity. The banned films include at least two of the most interesting made in China in the last year. *Bloody Morning* (distantly related to Gabriel Garcia Marquez' *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*) is widely regarded in film circles as the best movie of 1990, while *Mama* (a wholly unsentimental account of a single mother's trials in raising a retarded son) is a remarkably innovative debut by twenty-seven-year-old director Zhang Yuan.

Wu Ziniu's *The Big Mill* was widely shown in China last year, and so in this case the ban applies only to showings overseas. The film shows a forlorn and unappreciated old communist remembering his bloody past as a guerrilla in the 30s, and contains some of Wu's most striking images. Perhaps it's because *The Big Mill* slipped through the net in China that the minister came down hard on Zhou Xiaowen's

**The high level of official support for 'Jiao Yulu' has backfired in China**

generically (but not thematically) similar *Black Mountain Road*.

The recent interference with the Hong Kong-Taiwan co-production *My American Grandson* is especially revealing. Ann Hui's film centres on the relationship between a retired Shanghai teacher and his spoiled American-Chinese brat of a grandson; the culture-gap between them proves harder to bridge than the generation-gap, but the film ends on a sentimental note of reconciliation. Minister Ai evidently loathes the film as a whole, but took offence at two sequences in particular. In the first, the kid refuses to use the squalid toilet in his grandfather's shared apartment and is hurried to the nearest public toilet, only to find a queue outside. In the second, set in school, the kid ridicules a teacher's class on the "model student" Lai Ning, who lost his life fighting a fire in a state-owned forest; the kid points out that Lai Ning would have been more sensible to fetch adult help than to plunge into the flames himself. To his shame, producer Du Youling agreed to cut both these sequences from the print screened on the closing night of the Hong Kong Film Festival.

What exactly was Minister Ai objecting to? To the revelation that Shanghai's toilet facilities belong to a bygone age, and to the notion that the Communist equivalent of holy writ might be held up to question. One wonders which meant more to him, the toilets or the "model student"? The producer's excuse for succumbing to the pressure to make the cuts was that he wished to maintain good relations with China because he hoped to shoot more films there in the future. Presumably his next production will be a biography of the "model student" Lai Ning.

Meanwhile Minister Ai is solidly behind the current film *Jiao Yulu*, directed by Wang Jixing, in which the title character is another exemplary communist martyr: the selfless Party secretary in an appallingly backward rural commune of the 60s. This is the kind of film that the minister would like to see representing China at foreign film festivals. Amusingly, the high level of official support for the film has backfired in China. Thousands of patrons (many of them instructed to attend screenings by their work units) have bought and sent tickets to the authorities, urging them to learn from Jiao Yulu's example.

To the outsider, it seems genuinely astonishing that China is ready to go on scoring own-goals like this, at a time when the country is so desperate to regain international standing. Communist governments' attempts to manipulate facts and to pressure artists into conformity always excite international attention, and always provoke sympathy for the artists in question. You'd think they would have learned by now. Minister Ai, of course, will find more scapegoats to blame for causing "embarrassment" to China, and the short-term policies he is pursuing will remain in force until he is removed from his post and the political tide turns back in favour of China's reformists. Until then, though, tunnel vision rules.



# A painter's tales

Movies, pictures in themselves, have inspired me as long as I can remember. Maybe that's why a few early pictures of mine are still included in nostalgic anthologies of that underheated mode called Pop Art. Nothing is more popular than movies. They are to me what popular illustrations were to Van Gogh. Movies are friends, companions of lonely childhood, nervous growing up, the folly of maturity and ageless immaturity. They will succour me now unto death because my first boy, spoonfed on movies, has been writing them for Hollywood these last ten years under his movie name, Lem Dobbs, which he took from the Bogart character in *Sierra Madre*.

As I write these lines, Lem has been offered his first directing job. He promises me a little part, the way Huston put his dad in his (John's) first picture, *Maltese Falcon*. Lem and I talk movies for about an hour each week on the phone, London-Hollywood, and when he comes home we never stop talking movies.

*The Red Shoes* played for a very long time when it first came out, in a theatre just off Times Square. I was its most rapt teenager. When I painted Michael Powell thirty years later, I told him *The Red Shoes* set me dreaming what an artist's life might be like. An artist's life was to be in Europe, up in that balcony crowded with Marius Goring and all those students; it was personified by Albert Basserman showing his sketches to Anton Walbrook. Many years later I would fix Basserman's great face in a print. Above all, if one became an artist one could lay claim to Moira Shearer, whose Vicky in ballet practice tights would remain a sexual icon all my life. A few months ago, at Michael's memorial service, St James's, Piccadilly, after Goring, Cusack, and Scorsese spoke, there wasn't a dry eye as a piper came down the aisle playing 'I Know Where I'm Going'.

All my days as a painter have been spent in an intricate web called Modernism (for lack of a better word). I suspect many poets, novelists and composers feel the same way. Much of our art has been dominated or influenced by highly radical, often abstruse, difficult modes attracting very special audiences and even fewer communicants. Why, pray tell, has the art of film not drawn the fire of triumphal Modernism?

A meeting with John Ford, Michael Powell's funeral, 'The Return of Frank James' – these are among the memories that haunt movie-mad painter, R. B. Kitaj

No Picasso has transformed movies. Abstraction has not seduced one great film-maker. Where is the Schönberg, the Joyce, the Pound of movies, let alone the army of artists who drink at these great wellsprings during almost a century? In our other arts the Great Experiments became classics of our Kulcher such as Cubism, Surrealism, Dada, Atonalism, Formalism, Stream-of-Consciousness, Expressionism and so on. But in film art, Experimentalist Modernism remained marginal, as in Anger, Brakhage, some early Russian stuff, Hans Richter, Autant-Lara, some UFA phantasies.

I am fascinated that Abstraction, which holds the awestruck attention of so much of our art milieu, is all but absent in serious film. I would have thought that Moving Abstraction (on flat screens) would have a Mondrian, a Rothko, a Miró, a tradition by now. Sure, we can all guess why not: the almighty dollar and its box office, narrative insistence of film, the powerful illusion of real people acting out real lives, you name it... But I'm still a little puzzled that so few Modernist films seem to enter the canon – *Le Chien andalou*, *Entr'Acte*, some great montage effects in Eisenstein and others, I suppose.

One answer may lie in my own taste – although I admire the Lang of *Metropolis*, I truly love the Lang of *The Return of Frank James*. *Metropolis* lies in my cultural archive; *Frank James* is a bosom pal, or I should say, pals – the young Henry Fonda, glorious Gene Tierney, Carradine the elder, J.E. Bromberg, Jackie Cooper, the utterly singular Donald Meek.... Their shades dance in my dreams for half a century. I would know the rasping voice of Henry Hull in the dark.

Maybe people feel the way I do. Maybe actors acting can't be any more distorted or transformed on the flat screen than on the stage, except for a little expressionist or surrealist or technological fiddling here and there? But someone should tell me why there is no cultivated audience for Moving Abstraction as there is for still Abstraction. Five dollars for the best answer.

Sometimes I think movies are half way between real life and paintings. By the time actors I like, and like to observe (the way an artist observes people) – say, Ralph Richardson or Gary Cooper, or Louis Jourvet or Margaret Sullivan – become flattened-out shapes, black

and white and grey (the colours of drawing), or technicolour, oddly flickering forms, they and their unusual new dimensions begin to resemble the flat painting surface, peopled by the sleight-of-hand paintbrush, stroking unusual human forms based on usual human forms upon the canvas in gestures of dark and light. Also, the rectangular screen edits its drama; the director does anyway, not unlike the compositional sense in still paintings which is governed by edges but electrified by the nerve of the painter.

Almost everyone I know loves movies, but love's fingerprints are as singular as any aspect of our cultural body. "All life is an argument about matters of taste", wrote Nietzsche. One of the dynamics of movies in my life is the relation they bear to my tastes – movies formed great areas of my taste. I think, for instance, I owe as much to movies as to books my sense of and devotion to the fantastical as an art condition.

This may be because I was weaned on movies more than on children's books. Later on, books would supplant movies as harbingers and phantasts. Instead of Grimm or Milne or Hugh Lofting, my childhood fantasies centred around *Lost Horizon*, *Beau Geste*, *Wolfman*... The characters who arose in my daydreams were grotesques invented by the likes of Sam Jaffe, J. Carroll Naish and Ouspenskaya. As I became something of a fantasist in my painting, movie culture gave way to bookish, dark urban inspiration and the influence of precursors in the traditions of art. But movie tastes and art tastes still couple and dance their odd dance as I grow old.

I live and make my paintings in a house of books and pictures and pictures in books. Although I come from The People of the Book, I'm not a scholar but a kind of confused Alchemist because I often conjure my paintings in a book-haunted disorder, a dissident cousin to Modernist art practice.

First of all, each book, each pamphlet, has a history. I found it somewhere – in a city, in a bookshop, during an adventure, on a walk, on a prow, from a catalogue list. Take movie books, for instance. I keep a special collection of these, very select and separate from the immense movie archive my son has assembled on the



top floor, which he tends when he returns home.

Many years ago, I discovered some little Italian books (*Cineteca Domus*) published in 1945 or so. Imagine De Sica's Rome. Each of these little treasures presents enlarged film frames, one on each page, no text, devoted to one whole movie. I soon realised what excited me. These were not stills, the posed photographs in most movie books. Each of these pages was a gem – the composed art of the director, frozen forever, for me, for my alchemical painting profit in my house of books and pictures.

It has taken me over twenty years to find about ten of these little volumes: Clair's *Le Million*, Duvivier's *Casbah*, Carné's *Le Jour se lève* and two volumes of the films of Max Lindner and Larry Semon, *et al.* I treat these pages like Degas, Van Gogh and their friends treated their treasured Japanese prints, as exotic messages which say: here on this sheet, another artist, in another medium, suggests to me a foreign sensibility, an ambiguous drama, an alien or familiar physiognomy, a formal posture, a hint of a solution to a painting problem, a flat slice of life (movie-style) and so on and on. A single plate showing only a fuzzy, light-dappled detail of Jean Gabin's hand and tie becomes a cultural revelation worthy of Proust.

Another series I love to collect is the little French pamphlets called *Anthologie du cinéma*. They contain few frame enlargements (books which do are surprisingly scarce), but each (black and yellow) pamphlet contains a director or actor in its mini-world: Greville, Murnau, Kuleshov, Romm, Del-luc, Fejös, Rex Ingram, Mizoguchi, Borzage, Mosjoukine, Jannings, Juvet, Musidora, Vertov and the Nazi Veit Harlan are just some I look at quite often. I pick these things up in odd corners of Paris over many years. Sometimes the plates are so tiny I can hardly tell what's going on, which goads my interest. I like the little NFT booklets for their even tinier plates.

My friend Charles Hunt at Zwemmers, whose inner sanctum of rare art books is one of my favourite places in London, found me a full set of *CLOSE UP*, which must be the Garbo of film journals. In any case, I fondle these bound copies as if they were. They are subtitled: "The Only Magazine Devoted to Films as an Art" and began publication about 1927. They are staggering in



**R.B. Kitaj, 'John Ford on his Death Bed', 1983-84**

their editing of rare material. Just today I opened one to a plate of a movie called *The Flame in the Fog*, a Japanese film by J. Shige Sudzuky (never heard of him/her). It says the whole film was made in the fog and I noted in my sketchbook: "Make a fog or mist painting, 17 January 1991 as Desert Storm is ten hours old".

I don't wish to bore you with more bibliomania which is tedious for straight people, but I must mention the favourite wife in this enclosed harem – *Images du cinéma français*, 1945, introduced by Picasso's pal, Eluard. I have found three copies in twenty-five years, one of which I tear pages from and keep in special archives (which means either on the floor or I can't find them).

Rembrandt kept a special folio of drawings and engravings by Mantegna which he called "The Precious Book", from which he copied and drew ideas. Such is my Precious Book, second only to my volumes of Giotto, Cézanne, Degas, Rembrandt and a few others. It is a sourcebook I keep in both my studio rooms among pictures and texts I most cherish. When I made a painting for the cover of John Ashbery's volume of poetry, *Houseboat Days*, I was inspired by a still in this book of Allégret's *Lac aux dames*. When Ashbery saw my painting he knew the girl was Simone Simon and he knew the book. He said that it was one of his favourite source-books, too.

In 1970 I spent a year teaching life drawing at UCLA. My children and I

lived in Hollywood, just above Sunset, and I wanted to do a big painting about Hollywood, about the movie aura which seemed always present in my life (I was even briefly dating a movie star then). Lem was about twelve and more movie-mad than his old man. Even then he wanted to be a director when he grew up.

As preparation for my Hollywood painting I visited some of the great old directors so I could sketch them in their houses (or mansions). Movie friends would arrange these drawing sessions and Lem always came with me – these guys were his idols. We visited Mamoulian, Renoir, Hathaway, Wilder and Milestone.

One Sunday morning we rang the doorbell of John Ford. He lived in a fine old-fashioned house near Westwood. The walls were covered with framed photographs of American military heroes, all signed to John Ford or to "Jack"... from Bull Halsey, from Ike, from Mark Clark. We were led into the great man's bedroom and there he was in bed wearing what I thought at first was a baseball cap but then realised was an admiral's bridge cap from when he shot *The Battle of Midway*. There was a big bowl on his bedside table for him to spit in and his crucifix and rosary hung nearby. I figured maybe he was dying. He stunned us as we came in, saying something like: "Too bad you just missed Duke Wayne who just left". For a moment the whole Ford Repertory Company flashed across my mind, filing out after Wayne: Ward Bond, Jack Pennick, Ben Johnson, Jane Darwell, Ken Curtis, Francis Ford, John Qualen.

Well, I began to draw, sitting by him, and Lem took some snapshots with his little Minox spy camera. Ford said: "Make sure you let enough light in that camera, boy". We stayed about an hour and he played the Irish Rebel when he learned we lived in England. He was like his films – grand hokum and the grace of genius. Like everyone else in movies he said the studios screwed up his films and I thought, God, what would *The Grapes of Wrath* or *The Searchers* or *The Cavalry Trilogy* or *The Sun Shines Bright* have been like if the bosses had left him alone?

As we left he warned Lem not to go to bloody film school. Rembrandt used to tell his pupils not to travel – not even to Italy! When John Ford tells you when you're twelve not to go to film school, you don't. Lem never did.



# All you need to know

Michael Wood

## Roadside Hollywood

Jack Barth, Contemporary Books,  
\$9.95, 276pp

## The Hollywood Musical

Clive Hirschhorn, Pyramid Books,  
£19.99, 480pp

## The Great Movie Stars 3:

## The Independent Years

David Shipman, Macdonald,  
£19.95, 281pp

Reference books are like mirrors. We wonder whether the creature we see in them, that composite, scruffy image of our supposed curiosity, can really be who we are. But quite often we have to confess the resemblance: those tacky, morbid, devious, glamorous, pedantic, compulsive and miscellaneous interests are our very own.

*Roadside Hollywood* is full of standard gossip, with locations and careers reliably described; *The Hollywood Musical* and *The Great Movie Stars 3* are thoroughly researched and packed with facts of all kinds. What's interesting in the books taken together is the sense of a link between stardom and death and between death and regret, the whole package part of a (largely) American vision of a world where nothing we do leaves a mark.

Linda Darnell, said in Barth's book to have died while watching one of her own films on television, is an eloquent representation of this feeling, a person disappearing into an image. But we can also find it in the elaborate musical sets pictured in Hirschhorn, in the careers recounted by Shipman. Posterity is peculiarly capricious in this respect, so perverse about what it keeps and what it loses that it merely seems to confirm the initial vision: all we have (if we're lucky) is an old movie.

*Roadside Hollywood* is friendly and full of opinions and whimsy, at times converting terrible taste into a kind of style (on *Brainstorm*: "Natalie Wood died during production, but it's not all that bad"). Barth lists, state by American state, the places where movies have been shot or located, famous filmbound sons and daughters, and things still to be seen – mainly birthplaces, old sets, theme parks and (obsessively) death sites, graves, clutches of old clothes and shoes.

It's good to know that Seattle (*The Fabulous Baker Boys*, *Say Anything*) is now what anonymous America is supposed to look like. Or that Sparta, Illinois, scene of the historical incident behind

*In the Heat of the Night*, was turned into Sparta, Mississippi so the movie would "seem more Southern". Or that the enterprising home town of a not only imaginary but as yet unborn figure in *Star Trek* put up a sign saying "Future birthplace of Captain James T. Kirk".

*The Hollywood Musical* is a vast labour of love. First published in 1981 and now revised and updated, it describes year by year from 1927 to 1990 what was happening in American musicals. The chronology allows us to see, as Hirschhorn himself notes, that the musical, unlike other genres, is given to near total eclipse from time to time. There have always been resurrections, but Hirschhorn isn't hopeful and ends his introduction on a mournful note. He quotes a character from a compilation movie (*That's Entertainment*, 1974), speaking about an earlier movie (*Broadway Melody*, 1940) and saying "You'll never see its like again..."

Movies themselves are always nostalgic for old movies, but I'm not sure we have to join them. In fact, this book does something more dynamic and less indulgent than it seems to promise: it records the work of all the people associated with the films, "illuminates", as Gene Kelly says in his foreword, "the source from which many of the finished works sprang". It corrects posterity's caprices, and what we see as we turn the pages is not a warm world of nostalgia, but a glittering world of hard work. It's not that people in musicals happily break into song and dance as if they lived in a place without problems. They sing and dance in spite of the problems, *against* the problems, and the sheer labour involved in sets and numbers is a tribute to the art which turns hard slog into grace.

There are many wonderful images in this book, but one especially haunts me. In *The King of Jazz* (1930), an orchestra of some twenty members sits on the open top of a giant grand piano. At the piano, on a huge bench, sit five pianists, their hands considerably smaller than the great keys they rest on. They can't play this piano, the whole image is dreamlike; what we see is music within music, and music larger than life. And behind this vision is a fabulous architecture, the built music that only Hollywood ever managed convincingly to make.

David Shipman's earlier movie star books covered *The Golden Years* and *The International Years*. He had thought at first, he says, that *The Independent Years*

might not have produced any stars, only players, but he changed his mind on the grounds that there are, after all, "people capable of drawing cinemagoers into the theatres". I'm not sure you have to be a star to do that, or that doing that makes you a star – the whole concept seems more a matter of some weird collusion between their looks and talent and our shifting fantasies. Still, it's a working definition.

Shipman has picked ninety-two such figures, and written chatty and informative essays on them. He is anxious to speak for what he regards as the broad public (and so sneers at Woody Allen), and usefully insists throughout on money matters. Are there surprises here? There are the inevitable names, of course: Glenn Close, Robert De Niro, Eddie Murphy, Jack Nicholson (how come he wasn't in the last volume?), Al Pacino, Sissy Spacek, Meryl Streep. Is Rick Moranis a star? Is Anjelica Huston, not included in the book, only an actress? There aren't many foreigners, although Klaus Maria Brandauer and the eternal Gérard Depardieu do creep in.

What's cheering about this book is that a number of Shipman's stars have very little time for stardom. This could be (in some cases must be) the star's neat gimmick; but there really is a sense of a world of players here rather than amateurs or deities. Kevin Costner, Sally Field, Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer are good examples. They're not just hard to dislike, they're hard to worship – their stabs at immortality are simpler and straighter than such gestures used to be in the hectic days of high hype. Life is still short, but the sky seems a little nearer.

## You can't go home again

Stuart Hall

## Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991

Salman Rushdie, Granta Books,  
£17.99, 450pp

A new book from the author of *The Satanic Verses* is bound to attract attention – and not always for the right reasons. But there are plenty of good reasons for reading this new collection of Salman Rushdie's critical essays, journalism and reviews.

The book offers a rich and varied feast. Rushdie deals well with an







impressively wide range of writers – English, American, European and Latin American. He is excellent on post-colonial writing, in particular on V. S. Naipaul, and his touch on Kipling – always something of a test case – is sure: “I have never been able to read Kipling calmly”.

When it comes to film criticism, he dismantles with stiletto-like precision Richard Attenborough’s *Gandhi* for the way it “satisfies certain longings in the Western psyche”. The film *Gandhi* presents the fountainhead of mystical wisdom, the celluloid guru, the Christ figure, committed to submission, self-sacrifice and non-violence – everything, in fact, except the “crafty Gujarati lawyer and the history of one of the century’s greatest revolutions”.

Other essays on film include the controversial review of *Handsworth Songs*, which I disliked at the time for its knowing, supercilious, great novelist-puts-the-neophytes-in-their-place, *Guardian*-type smugness of tone – and still do. But I’m grateful for the moving appreciation of Satyajit Ray: not only because it does justice to one of the world’s great film-makers, but because it re-awakens for me a moment of shared migranhood.

“*Pather Panchali* was the first Ray movie I ever saw”, he writes, “and like many cinema-addicted Indians, I saw it, not in India but in London... I knew less about India’s greatest film-maker than I did about international cinema (or at any rate the movies of Robert Taylor, The Three Stooges, Francis the Talking Mule and Maria Montez). It was at the old Academy in Oxford Street, and at the National Film Theatre... I filled in the lamentable gap”.

As a cinema-addicted West Indian, I too haunted the same cinemas, thrilled to the same discoveries: Truffaut, Godard, Antonioni, Resnais, Kurosawa, Buñuel. For me, too, Robert Taylor and Maria Montez simply were the movies – part of every truly representative, twentieth-century, ‘colonial’ childhood. But I hadn’t realised until this essay how much my late-50s/60s romance with ‘international cinema’ was a London – and therefore a migrant-specific, diaspora – affair.

Rushdie’s journalism displays a vivid feel for language and an easy, fluid style, more at home with English vernacular rhythms than most so-called ‘English’ writers. His wonderful directness of address deceives the reader into complicity, only to transport him/her more or less straight to the outer limits of the fantastic. Fact ►

**Musical scales: ‘The King of Jazz’ in ‘The Hollywood Musical’ shows the labour involved in giving us pleasure**



◀ or fiction, he has a naturally extravagant imagination – but also a very sharp, political eye. Several of the pieces, like 'The New Empire within Britain' are, Rushdie acknowledges, of the "scolding-provoking variety".

This is an understatement. Rushdie seems compulsively driven to the provocative, to the cutting edge of his subject. "What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist. Without the freedom to challenge, even to satirise all orthodoxies, including religious orthodoxies, it ceases to exist". "Books become good when they go to this edge and risk falling over it". As Rushdie knows, this makes for an exhilarating read but a dangerous habit.

In the end I was drawn back to the writing which provided further clues about the so-called 'Rushdie affair'. This was staged – as much by friends as by enemies – as a confrontation between Western liberalism and Orientalist fundamentalism. 'Imaginary Homelands', the title essay of the book and one of its finest, begins to dismantle this fatal binary-ism.

Rushdie writes as a Muslim born in India, a post-religious secular writer born into a society torn apart by the hardening of religious and communal separatisms, an Indian who lives in England and writes in English ("We are translated men"). He is caught between that England which, for every colonial, remains a sort of dream, and the 'India' which can only be grasped through memory.

As 'Errata or Unreliable Narration in *Midnight's Children*' explains, "Time and migration had placed a double filter between me and my subject". *The Satanic Verses* was not a case of "Western freedoms versus Eastern unfreedoms". But it was about "an argument between purity and impurity". Not only religious, but – perhaps more dangerously – cultural impurity.

"*The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotch-potch, a bit of this and that is how newness enters the world. This is the great possibility that migration gives the world and I have tried to embrace it".

This is the authentic voice, the credo, of the post-colonial, the diaspora imagination. What the 'Rushdie affair' suggests is that anyone who writes, sings, dances, makes movies or plays from this position may expect, for the foreseeable future, to be assailed

by the "Pure" on either side, and punished for it.

The last set of essays moves compellingly – some would say alarmingly – from 'Naipaul among the Believers'; 'In God We Trust'; 'In Good Faith'; 'Is Nothing Sacred?' (all my italics) to the final piece, 'Why I Have Embraced Islam'. It would be naive to suppose that the reversal implied in this drift had escaped so self-conscious a writer.

I do not – like many of the "Pure" – question the sincerity of that final essay. "I have been finding my own way towards an intellectual understanding of religion", Rushdie says. That everything he has written, *The Satanic Verses* most of all, is in some way about religion, is true – even, perhaps, obvious. I do not begrudge him his moment of reconciliation. I even find it deeply moving. But I recognise it as a moment of profound danger.

Rushdie is one of the first, and most eloquent, voices of this new, post-migration double vision. He has been gripped by that *difference* which will neither go away nor stay in one place – leaving us 'mongrels' always "in a different place from [our] past... elsewhere". To judge from the evidence of this book, he has a very severe case of the diasporas – a post-lapsarian affliction from which it is impossible to go home again.

## Goodnight, John-Boy

Suzanne Moore

**Prime Time Families: Television Culture in Post-War America**

Ella Taylor, University of California Press, \$11.95, 205pp

On Tuesdays I have to pick up my six-year-old in time to watch *Happy Days*. On Thursdays it's *Kate and Allie*. Mondays it's *The Cosby Show*. She watches them all, but of course I don't. I mean *Kate and Allie* is all right – the kid has been trained to spot a single-parent household a mile off and here is a right-on alternative to the nuclear family and cute to boot. But because I now read *Happy Days* as a skewed attempt to normalise youth culture – remember how the super-straight Cunninghams seek to domesticise any oppositional edge Fonzie once had – well, I worry. Of course, when I was younger I loved him too, but that was the 70s and this is the 90s and the series is supposed to be set in the 50s. What does such doubly-glazed nostalgia mean now?

I guess it all goes to show how much television imagery is framed through

Ask the family – but which one? 'I Love Lucy' from the 50s, below, 'The Munsters' from the 60s, right, or 'Happy Days', bottom right, a 70s sit-com about the 50s



the institution of the family, which is the subject of Ella Taylor's excellent book, *Prime Time Families*. Starting with the white, middle-class homogenised families of 50s shows like *I Love Lucy* and *Leave it to Beaver*, she illustrates how the episodic series proved to be a successful formula in delivering mass audiences to corporate sponsors. All traces of social conflict were removed as the home became a repository for consensus values.

The 60s gave us families with a difference – *Bewitched*, *The Munsters*, *The Addams Family* and *My Mother the Car*. But however weird these wonderful families were, they were, above all else, families. Westerns too were cleaned up for television. Who can forget the bizarre all-male set-up of *Bonanza*, or the thoroughly 'in tact' *Waltons*?

Taylor argues that the subversive potential of TV was held firmly in check until 1970, when the collapse of consensus generated by the anti-war and civil rights movements meant new kinds of shows were produced. CBS was responsible for the prime-time feminism of *Gloria*, *Rhoda* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*; ABC for the 'wobble factor' of *Charlie's Angels*. From Archie Bunker's disenfranchised patriarch to the rise of the single working woman, the fractured 70s TV family could no longer be viewed as an isolated haven.

Taylor makes the convincing case that the utopian dream of a harmonious group was transferred from the home to the workplace. In shows like *Taxi* and *Barney Miller*, it is the workplace that becomes imbued with the values of collectivity, solidarity and emotional stability deemed missing from home life.

Yet this dialogue between imagery and cultural change is notoriously difficult to decode. Television provides both commentary and reflection, affirmation and





resolution. Above all, however, we must want to watch it. As Taylor picks her way through these debates she admits that in media studies the audience is like the weather – everybody talks about it but nobody does anything about it. Empirical research lags behind our conceptual understanding of audience, while television producers figure only as agents of some massive conspiracy.

Unwittingly Taylor echoes the argument often heard about 70s cinema – that this was a time when darker, more interesting work was produced, when the three 'A's now banished from Hollywood – anger, anxiety and ambivalence – could make their presence felt. Personally, I'm not so sure. For every *Taxi Driver* there was a *Grease* and while I vaguely remember the self-consciously genre-bending innovations of *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, it is now *Happy Days* I come home to.

## Love's labours lost

Kevin Jackson

### The Warrior's Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa

Stephen Prince, Princeton University Press, \$39.50, 344pp

By way of a final flourish for his introduction to *The Warrior's Camera*, Stephen Prince confides that "this study has been very much a labor of love". And in the dense pages which follow, Prince shows himself to be an attentive lover of Kurosawa's films.

Sequence after sequence, image after image is treated to the kind of exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) scrutiny that only the truly smitten swain can offer his beloved. Descriptive analyses of such length and detail are still rare in film criticism, and in many respects Prince's account is uncommonly well done, being both alert to the shifting nature of the master's styles and persuasively argued. There are grounds, though, for wondering whether Kurosawa would be wholly flattered by the attention.

For one thing, Prince is not the kind of suitor who can easily overlook his loved one's blemishes. He churlishly adds his voice to a hostile chorus by dismissing Kurosawa's adaptation of *The Idiot* (*Hakuchi*) as "amazingly bad", and slights even the widely admired *Rashomon* for, as he puts it, "conducting its enquiry into the constructedness of reality at the level of the signified".

More importantly, Prince and his subject often seem highly incompat-

ible. Kurosawa has expressed a strong distaste for the theoretical wing of film criticism: "They use extremely pedantic terminology. I do not believe in such rationalisation or jargon. Film should be more related to human feelings, more candidly". And though Prince duly quotes this passage, he remains silent about its gloomy implications for the more terminology-struck passages of his own writing.

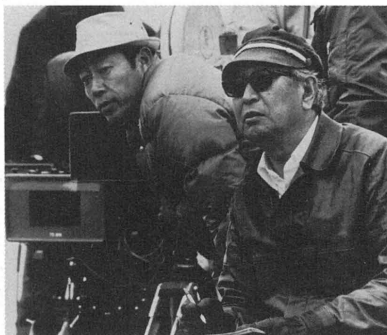
In political terms, too, director and critic make an odd couple. Prince is fired with enthusiasm at the more obviously 'committed' films and dismayed at the later, 'spiritual' ones, such as *Kagemusha* and especially *Ran*.

Yet there are happier aspects to this relationship. Prince takes a more catholic approach to criticism than he sometimes admits, and in *The Warrior's Camera* he draws substantially and enlighteningly on his readings in Japanese history, religion and aesthetics. Similarly, he seems as happy to quote from the likes of Mircea Eliade or Ernst Cassirer as he is from any of the more routine theorists, and the result is a richer compound than isolated quotations suggest.

His observations on the forces which have shaped Kurosawa's visual style are thought-provoking, if a shade over-confident. And some of the discussions of specific films are decidedly superior: Prince is particularly good on *Yojimbo*, partly because it is, with *Ikiru*, the only film to "admit a self-reflexive dimension".

Best of all, the book's title actually has a bearing on its most memorable arguments, which take off from earlier discussions of Kurosawa's real and imagined affiliations to the samurai class, the code of *bushido* and – especially – the ideal of heroism. Kurosawa's complex variations on the theme may well come to be acknowledged as his signal contribution to the post-war cinema.

In the meantime, Prince's book has set terms for debate that will be hard to ignore. Not least is his complaint that Kurosawa's heroic dimension is made possible by an "almost complete lack of interest in erotic matters". Jilted again.



The heroic ideal: Kurosawa, right, and cinematographer Takao Saito

## Shorts

### Making Visible the Invisible: An Anthology of Essays on Film Acting

Carole Zucker (ed), Scarecrow Press, £29.65, 426pp

● This anthology surveys that aspect of the seventh art that is always hardest to describe and analyse. Contributions range from "a semiotic approach to acting in the Griffith Biographs" to a blow-by-blow account of Ryan O'Neal and Jack Nicholson directed by Stanley Kubrick ("The Mad and the Beautiful").

### Cinema and Television:

#### Fifty Years of Reflection in France

Jacques Kermabon, Kumar Shahani (eds), Sangam Books, £14.95, 256pp

● Or how cinema learned to stop worrying and at least tolerate if not love television. An economic, historic, aesthetic and technological account of the relationship from the French perspective, which seems to be particularly combative ("French cinema has resisted the assaults of television more than anywhere else in the world").

### The Cinema of Jean Genet:

#### Un Chant d'amour

Jane Giles, BFI Publishing, £6.95, 89pp

● A slim volume nevertheless packed with interest, from a previously undocumented production history to a shot-by-shot analysis of Genet's only fully realised film.

### His Other Half: Men Looking at Women through Art

Wendy Lesser, Harvard University Press, £19.95, 294pp

● The author works her way into and out of a contradiction – "I am saying that gender both does and does not matter" – in this history of some of the reflections of women produced by men, from Dickens and Degas to Hitchcock's couples and Barbara Stanwyck's Lady Eve.

### Broadcasting: The New Law

Nicholas Reville, Butterworths, £14.95, 214pp

● This is essentially a handbook for lawyers, not easily dipped into by the lay viewer, though of clear relevance also to writers, producers, directors and performers in the telecommunications industry.

### The Hysterical Male:

#### New Feminist Theory

Arthur and Marilouise Kroker (eds), Macmillan, £10.99, 288pp

● An uneven collection of feminist psychoanalytic essays. The two pieces that deal specifically with film – on *sex, lies and videotape* and *The Man Who Envied Women* – are unfortunately among the most dense and least rewarding. Other subjects include President Bush, and male mothers in pulp romance fiction ("Confessions of a Harlequin reader"). For Baudrillard addicts only.



# Reviews

Reviews, synopses  
and full credits for all  
the month's new films



Big adventure: Johnny Depp in 'Edward Scissorhands' (see review page 42)





## Alice

**Certificate**  
12  
**Distributor**  
Rank  
**Production Company**  
Orion  
**Executive Producers**  
Jack Rollins  
Charles H. Joffe  
**Producers**  
Robert Greenhut  
**Co-producers**  
Helen Robin  
Joseph Hartwick  
**Associate Producers**  
Thomas Reilly  
Jane Read Martin  
**Production**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Helen Robin  
**Production Manager**  
Joseph Hartwick  
**Location Manager**  
Dana Robin  
**Casting**  
Juliet Taylor  
Associate:  
Ellen Lewis  
Additional:  
Todd Thaler Casting  
Judie Fixler  
**Assistant Directors**  
Thomas Reilly  
Richard Patrick  
**Screenplay**  
Woody Allen  
**Director of Photography**  
Carlo Di Palma  
In colour  
**Camera Operator**  
Dick Mingalone  
**Gyrosphere**  
**Operator**  
Mike Kelem  
**Video Engineer**  
Howard Weiner  
**Visual Effects**  
**Supervisor**  
Randall Balsmeyer  
**Visual Effects**  
Balsmeyer & Everett, Inc.  
**Optical Effects**  
The Effects House Corporation  
**Additional Optical Effects**  
The Magic Camera Company  
**Motion Control**  
**Operator**  
Don Canfield  
**Editor**  
Susan E. Morse  
**Production Designer**  
Santo Loquasto  
**Art Director**  
Speed Hopkins  
**Art Department**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Glenn Lloyd  
**Set Decorator**  
Susan Bode  
**Set Dresser**  
Dave Weinman  
**Scenic Artists**  
Master:  
James Sorice  
Standby:  
Cosmo Sorice  
**Visual Effects**  
**Storyboard**  
Jeff Balsmeyer  
**Practical Effects**  
3/Design Studio  
**Songs**  
"Limehouse Blues" by Philip Braham.  
Douglas Furber, performed by (1) Jackie Gleason, (2) Ambrose and his Orchestra; "Breezin' Along with the Breeze" by Dizzy Gillespie, Seymour Simons, Richard A. Whiting, performed by Jackie Gleason; "I Dream Too Much" by Dorothy Fields, Jerome Kern, performed by Paul Weston and his Orchestra; "Moonlight" by Will Hudson, Eddie

DeLange, Irving Mills, performed by Artie Shaw and his Orchestra; "La Cumparsita" by Matos Rodriguez, performed by The Castilians; "The Courier", "World Music" by Linda Hudes, performed by The Big Apple Circus Band; "Caravan" by Edward Kennedy Ellington, Irving Mills, Juan Tizol, performed by Erroll Garner; "I Remember You" by Johnny Mercer, Victor Schertzinger, performed by Jackie Gleason; "Moonlight Becomes You" by James Van Heusen, Johnny Burke, performed by Jackie Gleason; "Darn That Dream" by Edgar DeLange, Jimmy Van Heusen, performed by Theloniou Monk; "Southern Comfort" by Danny Alguire, Frank Thomas, Ward Kimball, performed by The Firehouse Five Plus Two; "Mack the Knife" by Kurt Weill, Marc Blitzstein, Berthold Brecht; "Flight of the Foo Birds" by Neal Hefti, performed by Count Basie; "Will You Still Be Mine" by Matt Dennis, Thomas M. Adair, performed by Erroll Garner; "O Tannenbaum", "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" performed by Liberace  
**Costume Design**  
Jeffrey Kurland  
**Wardrobe**  
**Supervisors**  
Men:  
Bill Christians  
Women:  
Patricia Eiben  
**Make-up Artist**  
Fern Buchner  
**Titles**  
The Effects House Corporation  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
Bob Hein  
**Sound Editor**  
Tony Martinez  
**Sound Recordists**  
Frank Graziadei  
James Sabat  
**Sound Re-recorder**  
Lee Dichter  
**Stock Footage**  
**Researchers**  
Mary Lance  
Producers Library Service  
**Production**  
**Assistants**  
Tom Amos  
Stacy Augenstein  
Andrew Bernstein  
Justin Moritt  
Danielle Rigby  
Monty Simons  
Aleks Zivanovich

**Cast**  
**Joe Mantegna**  
Joe  
**Mia Farrow**  
Alice  
**William Hurt**  
Doug  
**June Squibb**  
Hilda  
**Marceline Hugot**  
Monica  
**Dylan O'Sullivan**  
Farrow  
Kate  
**Matt Williamson**  
Dennis  
**Julie Kavner**  
Decorator

**Billy Taylor**  
Trainer  
**Holland Taylor**  
Helen  
**Michael-Vaughn Sullivan**  
Hairdresser  
**Robin Bartlett**  
Nina  
**Linda Wallem**  
Penny  
**Gina Gallagher**  
Joe's Daughter  
**Patience Moore**  
School Teacher  
**Diane Cheng**  
Doctor Yang's Assistant  
**Kim Chan**  
Doctor Yang's Patient  
**Keye Luke**  
Doctor Yang  
**Lynda Bridges**  
Saleslady  
**Anthony Cortino**  
Dog Groomer  
**Judy Davis**  
Vicki  
**Cybill Shepherd**  
Nancy Brill  
**Alec Baldwin**  
Eddie  
**Katja Schumann**  
Circus Equestrian  
**Vanessa Thomas**  
Circus Aerialist  
**Blythe Danner**  
Dorothy  
**Gwen Verdon**  
Alice's Mother  
**Patrick O'Neal**  
Alice's Father  
**Kristy Graves**  
Alice, age 18  
**Laurie Nayber**  
Young Dorothy  
**Rachel Miner**  
Alice, age 12  
**Amy Louise Barrett**  
Mrs Keyes  
**Caroline Aaron**  
Sue  
**Alexi Henry**  
Kimberly  
**James Toback**  
Professor  
**Bernadette Peters**  
Muse  
**Elle MacPherson**  
Model  
**Ira Wheeler**  
**Lisa Marie**  
Office Xmas Party Guests  
**Diane Salinger**  
Carol  
**Vicki's Analyst**  
Alfred Cherry  
**David Spielberg**  
Ken  
**Bob Balaban**  
Sid Moscovitz  
**Peggy Miley**  
Dorothy's Maid  
**George Manos**  
**Kim Weston-Moran**  
**Peter Tolan**  
**Kenneth Edelson**  
**Marvin Terban**  
**James McDaniel**  
**Roy Attaway**  
Dorothy's Xmas Party Guests  
**Jodi Long**  
**Suzann O'Neill**  
**Don Snell**  
**Robert Polenz**  
Park Avenue Couples

**9,555 feet**  
**106 minutes**

## USA 1990

### Director: Woody Allen

Despite the luxury life style she shares with her stolid husband Doug, New York housewife Alice is troubled by a general malaise. She also suffers from a pain in her back, and a longing for Joe, a man she has met while collecting her children from school. She consults Dr Yang, a Chinese acupuncturist, and under hypnosis has a vision of Doug, who relives with her the night he proposed. Under the unfluence of herbs prescribed by Dr Yang, Alice makes extravagant advances to an astonished Joe, and arranges to meet him, but is too frightened and guilty to keep the date.

Dr Yang prescribes more herbs, which make Alice invisible, allowing her to watch while Joe makes love to his ex-wife Vicki, an advertising executive. Eager to start a writing career, despite Doug's discouragement, Alice visits her old friend Nancy, now a television executive, but is patronisingly rebuffed by her. Further herbs summon the ghost of Alice's dead ex-boyfriend Eddie, who takes her to revisit the Moonlight Casino, scene of their youthful amours. Alice embarks on a series of dates with Joe, which fuels her writing ideas, although Nancy remains disparaging.

On the pretext of visiting her estranged sister Dorothy, Alice sneaks out to visit Joe and attempts to end their relationship. Upset, she visits Dr Yang, and walks in on an opium session; under the influence of the drug, she sees herself revisiting her family home, where she is reunited with Dorothy and remembers her youthful Catholic zeal. Finally embarked on an affair with Joe, Alice takes a writing course; the doctor's latest herb summons a Muse, who inspires her to write about her mother, a former actress.

Alice shares the invisibility herb with Joe, and she eavesdrops while her rich friends gossip about Doug's infidelity - confirmed when she catches Doug and a girlfriend at an office party. Joe tells Alice that while invisible he has discovered that Vicki still loves him, and that he has ▶



In the city: Mia Farrow

## Reviews

Alice



◀ decided to return to her. Alice discovers Dr Yang leaving for Tibet; he sums up her new situation of freedom, and gives her a love potion that will cause either Doug or Joe to fall in love with her, as she chooses.

At Dorothy's party, the potion is accidentally poured into an egg-nog, causing several male guests to declare their love for her. Alice declares her intention to leave Doug and go to Calcutta to work with her idol, Mother Teresa; she is finally seen flying to Calcutta, then returning to start a new life with her children.

● The jokey tone of *Alice* initially suggests a mere diversion after the Dostoevskian moral wrangling of *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. But although far lighter, it forms something of a companion-piece to that film. *Alice* also deals in lost illusions; in the familiar Allen theme of an ideal life style obscurely troubled by a deep-lying malaise ("Do I detect trouble in Paradise?" asks Eddie's ghost); in blindness and insight, and in privileged (self-) knowledge (gained here, as in *Another Woman*, through eavesdropping or overseeing). Above all, Alice grapples with the Catholic counterpart to Judah Rosenthal's Jewish guilt in *Crimes*; like Judah, Alice fantasmally revisits a dinner of her childhood, in her case finding a confessional booth installed in the garden.

At first sight, the quasi-psychoanalytical therapy that Alice undergoes might appear to work towards a very 80s American ideal of self-fulfilment, by no means incompatible with the trendy materialism of her friends, and part and parcel of the fad for alternative health satirised here (Alice muses on her bad back: "I wonder if I had a Swede walk on it?"). But *Alice* at once satirises that ideology and reappropriates it for a more generous humanism: Alice works through the temptations of sensuality and solipsism to rediscover the ideals of her youth.

Focusing more than usual on one central character, Allen uses a complex narrative structure, and his usual extensive cast of near-cameos, to suggest the rambling, fragmented nature of Alice's world. Events are imagined, remembered, recounted in voice-over, their reality constantly undermined – the initial meeting with Joe is told in flashback, the embrace that opens the film revealed as a daydream. Alice's attainment of grace is considerably enhanced by an atmosphere that at times seems genuinely magical, albeit in a self-consciously artificial way. Alice and Eddie's flight over Manhattan and their dance in a lunar spotlight, or the klieg-lit interview with Alice's dead mother, are highly effective embodiments of Alice's rich, but repressed, writerly

(or directorial?) imagination.

The film's most remarkable formal trick comes at the end. Alice, apparently, goes to Calcutta, returning to do volunteer work and raise her kids in a funky but chic downtown apartment. This, in itself, makes an unconvincingly cathartic ending – Alice's new life looks pretty much like a rich girl's whim. But considering the similarly uncomfortable ending of *Crimes* (in which Judah literally gets away with murder), there is every reason to suspect that *Alice* should not be taken at face value. In fact, what we see is a zoom in on Alice, cutting abruptly to footage of a plane in flight, Calcutta street scenes, Alice outside a downtown day centre and playing with her children, while in voice-over her erstwhile friends chatter, "Did you hear about Alice?", before passing on to other catty gossip.

This suggests that Alice's future may still exist purely in her own imagination; or that, even if real, it is clearly a drama of consequence only to her, a mere snippet of uptown chit-chat to everyone else. Either way, this ending is hardly unequivocal. It is a suitable ending for a film built on inconsistencies both of plot and character: notably, Alice's miraculous leap into a sex-bomb persona as she breathily interrogates Joe, "You look like you blow sax to me... What reed do you use?"; and the fundamental improbability of her remaining

unaffected by the bitchy materialistic social world she inhabits.

Apart from Mia Farrow's wonderfully bemused, protean heroine, *Alice* is richly stocked in character pleasures: Mantegna's regular Joe, sentimental as Alice herself, but confused and easily swayed by his ex-wife's sleeker charms; Cybill Shepherd playing up her familiar sass-and-shoulder pads persona; and Alec Baldwin, as Joe's double/precursor, the parallel made clear in the similarity of the two men's raincoats. Minor characters drop in with panache: Julie Kavner as an interior designer bearing a gift of a *fin de siècle* eel trap, director James Toback as a professor of scriptwriting, and actor-director Bob Balaban as the nearest the film has to an Allen-surrogate, a diminutive, nervy admirer of Alice.

For a film about the imagination and the inner life, *Alice* paradoxically produces a more vivid sense of New York than Allen has shown us for some time. We rediscover it through Alice's eyes, with a sense of ordinary locations being heightened through love. The pleasures of the city are a reminder that *Alice* is not just a variation on Lewis Carroll's tale of a shape-changing innocent; it also has a touch of *The Wizard of Oz* (the name of Alice's sister is no accident), with a useful moral for jaded urbanites: "There's no place like home".

**Jonathan Romney**



Trouble in paradise: Mia Farrow, William Hurt





On a world stage (Liv Ullmann)

**Distributor**

ICA Projects

**Production****Companies**

Jorge Estrada Mora  
Producciones (Buenos  
Aires)/Journal Film/  
Alma Film (Berlin)

**Producers**

Jorge Estrada  
Klaus Volkenberg  
**Associate Producers**

Jeffrey Steiner

Hans Gerhard Stahl

**Production****Supervisors**

Jorge Sabate

Renee Gundelach

**Production****Managers**

Sabina Sigler

Adrián Eduardo Solar

Thomas Dierks

**Casting**

Alcides Chiesa

**Assistant Directors**

Fernando Bassi

Lindsey Morrison

Ana Poliak

**Screenplay**

Jeanine Meerapfel

Alcides Chiesa

**Screenplay****Collaborators**

Osvaldo Bayer

Agnieszka Holland

**Director of****Photography**

Axel Block

In colour

**Camera Operators**

Carlos Ferra

Peter Polsak-Lohmann

**Editor**

Juliane Lorenz

**Production****Designers**

Jorge Marchegiano

Rainer Schaper

**Storyboard**

Julia López

**Special Effects**

Tom Cumdon

**Music**

José Luis Castiñeira

de Dios

**Songs**

"Nunca más" by José

Luis Castiñeira de

Dios, Susana Lago,

performed by Susana

Lago; "Quedémonos

aquí" by Héctor

Scamponi, Homero

Exposito, performed

by Rosanna Falasca;

"Muchacha ojos de

papel" by Luis Alberto

Spinetta, performed

by Gonzalo

Arguimbau

**Costume Design**

Jorge Ferrari

**Make-up**

Mirta Blanco

**Sound Recordists**

Dante Amoroso

Gunther Kortwich

**Sound Re-recorder**

Hartmut Eichgrün

**Production****Assistants**

Fernando Bassi

Lindsey Morrison

Ana Poliak

**Cast**

Liv Ullmann

Maria

Cipe Lincovsky

Raquel

Federico Luppi

Pancho

Victor Laplace

Diego

Harry Baer

Raquel's Friend in

Berlin

Lito Cruz

Chief of Police Tito

Greger Hansen

"Aleman"

Nicolas Frei

Chief of Special

Commandos

Cristina Murta

Amancay Espindola

Chela Cardala

Mothers

Gonzalo Arguimbau

Carlos

Fernan Miras

Pedro

Victoria Solarz

Raquelita

Maria Carla Bustos

Young Maria

Silvina Pilat

Young Raquel

Pablo Aquilante

Young Pancho

Max Berliner

Cemetery Guard

**Ana Maria Amlos**

Maria's Mother

Ruth Jasiuk

Raquel's Mother

Bernardo Baras

Theatre Director

Pedro Loeb

Estela Prez de

Guerrero

Raquel's Assistants

José Luiz Diez

"Hemón"

Verónica Gargani

Woman Commando

Cecilia Biagini

Pedro's Wife

Jorge Sanaté

Raul Florido

Mario Fromentese

Roberto Zanoui

Claudio Rissi

Frederico Scasso

Luis Quirós

Oscar Escobar

Luis Aranosky

Commandos

Beatriz Thihaudin

Sara Krell

Neighbours

Carlos Giordano

Raquel's Chauffeur

Guillermo Sosa

Omar Sucari

Police

Nstor Tirri

Gustavo Bonamino

Journalists

Ricardo Alanis

Pier Vincenzi

Cemetery Workers

José Andrade

Vicente Caliseya

Gustavo Parisi

Jorge Palacios

Soldiers

Marc Papanastasiou

Guitarist in Berlin

Eva Elner

Carolina Papuleo

9,720 feet

108 minutes

Subtitles

**Argentina/West Germany 1988****Director: Jeanine Meerapfel**

Buenos Aires, 1945: Maria defends her friend Raquel against the anti-Semitic taunts of fellow schoolchildren; at the cinema together, the pair decide to become actresses when they grow up. 1978: Raquel is a famous stage actress and Maria a housewife, married to Pancho, with three children. On the night that Raquel is lauded on television for her playing of Antigone, Maria's home is invaded by security officials looking for her eldest son, Carlos (Raquel's godson). When Carlos fails to appear next day, Maria and Raquel search in vain in the shantytown where he lives, and Maria and Pancho's efforts to trace him, through both official channels and by bribery, prove equally fruitless. Fearing for his own safety, Maria's other son Pedro leaves home.

At the same time, Raquel is the target of anti-Semitic threats, and tries to persuade her boyfriend Diego, who works in television, to leave with her for Berlin. Maria finally participates (against Pancho's advice) in a demonstration with the other 'mothers' of lost children in the Plaza de Mayo. She is arrested but released unharmed, and a further demonstration is picked up by the foreign press; meanwhile, Raquel's theatre is firebombed and she leaves for West Germany without Diego. 1981: Financially and socially bereft in Berlin, Raquel is cheered by the news that the mothers have selected Maria to meet the German head of state to appeal for help. In Berlin, Maria rejects the testimony of a friend of Carlos' that her son was in a bad way when last seen; Raquel takes her friend to a cemetery where members of her own family are buried.

1983: A penniless Raquel returns to Argentina, and is met by Diego, now married and a high-ranking television executive. She meets Maria at a press conference given by her and the other 'mothers'; that same day, a body, purportedly Carlos', is exhumed from a cemetery, but Maria refuses to accept it as her son. Raquel accuses her of exploiting Carlos' death and they part acrimoniously. 1985: On Maria's birthday, she and Pancho meet Pedro (now married with a child) in a restaurant. Maria recognises a fellow diner as one of the security men who came to her home the night Carlos disappeared. She puts an empty chair at his table and walks out. Raquel visits Maria and an uneasy reconciliation takes place, with Maria unshaken in her faith that Carlos is still alive, and believing that she has been reborn through his political idealism.

Jeanine Meerapfel's *La Amiga*, about Argentine's famous Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo, offers not just one but two strong female protagonists coming to terms with their personal losses and developing an increasing political awareness. The film is structured very much like a Hollywood 'woman's picture', and it's not too difficult to imagine Shirley MacLaine and Anne Bancroft (from *The Turning Point*) or Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave (from *Julia*) sinking their teeth into the roles of Maria and Raquel.

Although they both vow to become famous actresses, only Raquel seems to achieve this ambition. But as events progress, Raquel's fame – established when she plays the heroic matriarch Antigone – diminishes, and it is the dowdy figure of Maria who is thrust on to the world stage, giving interviews to foreign journalists and meeting overseas heads of state.

*La Amiga* is rife with such ironies, establishing a whole series of similarities and inversions in the lives of the two women: Maria achieves fame through the 'mothers', Raquel (childless) fails even to get a stage project about being a mother off the ground; Maria marginalises her husband because of her political commitments, Raquel loses a potential spouse through political exile. Unfortunately, Meerapfel gives such reversals more emphasis than they need, the heavy-handedness at its worst in the flashback treatment of Carlos. Maria's son – always in brilliant sunlight – is an inspiring activist for the poor, a perfect son to both mother and godmother, and, most emetically of all, a guitar-strumming hunk for assorted smiling señoritas.

The mawkish portrayal of Carlos is in strong contrast to the more trenchant treatment meted out to his mother. It soon becomes clear that, despite the longevity of their friendship, Maria actually has little insight into Raquel's life. She is completely nonplussed by Raquel's visit to her family's graves in Berlin and seems oblivious to her heritage of anti-Semitic persecution. Maria's hard-line approach to her cause allows the film to avoid conventional quagmires of guilt and redemption, although it also prevents a more illuminating analysis of whether political activism for women will always take its toll on their domestic/social relationships. By isolating Maria from friends and family, and only superficially alluding to her bond with the other 'mothers' (they serve as the anonymous mob to her heroic spokeswoman), the film fails to explain why the mothers proved so efficacious against a brutal system.

**Farrah Anwar**





Old school: Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Gene Hackman

**Certificate**

15

**Distributor**

20th Century Fox

**Production Company**

Interscope Communications  
For 20th Century Fox

**Producers**

Ted Field  
Scott Kroopf  
Robert W. Cort

**Co-producers**

Carolyn Shelby  
Christopher Ames

**Associate Producer**

Kim Kurumada

**Production**

Marshall Peck

**Production**

Co-ordinator

Paula Benson-Himes

**Unit Production**

Manager

Kim Kurumada

**Location Manager**

Rory Enke

**Post-production**

Co-ordinator

Ann Pollack

**Casting**

Lora Kennedy

Linda Lowy

San Francisco:

Davia Nelson

Atmosphere:

Nancy Hayes

Jennifer Van Horn

**Assistant Directors**

Marty Ewing

Jodi Ehrlich

Robert J. Mooney

Chris Dellapenna

**Screenplay**

Carolyn Shelby

Christopher Ames

Samantha Shad

**Director of**

Photography

Conrad L. Hall

**Colour**

DeLuxe

**Camera Operator**

Todd Henry

**Editor**

Ian Crafford

**Production Designer**

Todd Hallowell

**Art Director**

Mark Billerman

**Set Design**

Barbara Mesney

**Set Decorator**

Dan May

**Estelle's Artwork**

Juana Alicia

**Special Effects**

Tom Sindich

**Music**

James Horner

**Music Performed by**

Brandon Fields

Ralph Grierson

James Horner

Ian Underwood

**Music Editor**

Jim Henrikson

**Songs**

"Can't Fight Fate"

by Diane Warren,

performed by Taylor

Dayne; "Up, Up, Up",

"Canned Music" by

Dan Hicks, performed

by Dan Hicks and

Acoustic Warriors

with the Lickettes;

"Home Going" by

Reverend Cleopheus

Robinson, performed

by Emmitt Powell

Gospel Elites; "If You

Don't Know Me by

Now" by Kenny

Gamble, Leon Huff,

performed by

Simply Red

**Choreographer**

Paula Smuin

**Costume Design**

Rita Ryack

**Costumers**

Women:

Mary Still

Men:

Michael J. Becker

**Make-up**

Head:

Steve Abrams

Artists:

Steven E. Anderson

John Elliott Jnr

**Title Design**

Paula Silver Ltd

**Titles/Optionals**

Pacific Title

**Supervising Sound**

Editors

Gary S. Gerlich

Dialogue:

Lucy Coldsnow

**Sound Editors**

Michael Evje

Dialogue:

Kimberly Harris-

Rivoli

Terry Dorman

David Giammarco

**Foley Editor**

David L. Horton Jnr

**Sound Recordists**

Michael Evje

Andrea Lakin

Samuel F. Kaufman

Music:

Shawn Murphy

Dolby stereo

**ADR Recordist**

Charlene Richards

**Sound Re-recordists**

Andy Nelson

Steve Pedderson

Don Digirolamo

**Sound Effects**

Editor

Elliot L. Koretz

**Technical/Legal**

Adviser

Richard Zitrin

**Production**

Assistants

Scott Rosencrans

Kimberly Hughes

**Cast**

Gene Hackman

Jedediah Tucker Ward

Mary Elizabeth

Mastrantonio

Maggie Ward

Colin Fries

Michael Grazier

Joanna Merlin

Estelle Ward

Larry Fishburne

Nick Holbrook

Donald Moffat

Quinn

Jan Rubes

Pavel

Matt Clark

Judge Symes

Fred Dalton

Thompson

Doctor Getchell

Jonathan Silverman

Brian

Joan McMurtrey

Anne

Anne Elizabeth

Ramsay

Deborah

David Byron

Carl

Tim Hopper

Howie

Robert David Hall

Steven Kellen

Ren Reynolds

Bartender at Bix

Wood Moy

Mr Minh

Victor Talmadge

Bernstein

Ken Grantham

Anthony Patricola

Hajna O. Moss

Laura Holbrook

Abigail Van Allyn

Judge Ormsby

Dan Hicks and

Acoustic Warriors

and the Lickettes

Band at Rosatti's

Naomi Eisenberg

Maryann Price

Group Band Singers

Emmitt Powell and

the Gospel Elites

Church Choir

9,853 feet

109 minutes

**USA 1990**

**Director: Michael Apted**

● Jed Ward is a civil liberties lawyer of the old school: idealistic, charismatic, and egotistically overbearing. His daughter, Maggie, is capable and charming, and on the brink of being promoted to partner in San Francisco's most prestigious corporate law firm. Jed takes on David and Goliath causes, scorning protocol and procedure to make his points; Maggie plays by the book, keeping emotion strictly separate from points of law. Jed's firm is small and friendly, run with the help of a loyal team of disciples; Maggie's is huge and professionally cut-throat, although she is involved in a secret affair with her boss, Mike.

In the pleasantly scruffy bar Jed chooses for his wedding-anniversary party, father and daughter's differences are shown to run bitter and deep. Maggie cannot forgive Jed for having been unfaithful to her long-suffering mother, and Jed cannot forgive Maggie for flouting his influence and selling out to Mammon. The pair are set to bring their rivalries into the courtroom when both are offered a 'class action' suit. The plaintiffs, represented by Jed, are seeking damages for injuries sustained when cars produced by the massive Argo corporation started blowing up. Maggie's job is to defend Argo – and, as she tells her mother, to secure her promotion and to win out against her father in "the one place where he can't make the rules".

But Maggie's determination is shaken, first by her mother's death of an embolism in the courthouse lobby, and then by the discovery of a witness with proof of Argo's negligence. To release this information would lose her the case – and incriminate her lover, who knew of its existence all along. So on the advice of her superiors, she conceals it – at the same time failing to draw their attention to a key piece of evidence in her father's possession. Jed's revelation exposes Mike as guilty of perjury, and destroys the professional reputation of Maggie's firm. The plaintiffs win their case. Father and daughter dance together at a party held to celebrate the victory, their differences buried at last.

● To have some two hours of classic courtroom drama ahead of you is generally a relaxing, civilised prospect. The basic plot conventions, after all, are laid down by law, and their ancillary characteristics – intelligent storytelling, straightforward camerawork, nice suits for the ladies and a suitably moral twist – have

evolved with a like sobriety. *Class Action* caps all these expectations nicely with its credit sequence, which pans from the Golden Gate Bridge over the Transamerica Pyramid and across the charming, solidly bourgeois streets of Nob Hill. This is San Francisco, heartland of old-school liberalism, the most unbrash and un-90s of all American cities. Surely here as nowhere else justice will be done.

This is a remarkably well-made and well-mannered film. There's no steamy sex, no violence, and the villains are merely run-of-the-mill corrupt. The political points about the superiority of 60s liberal over 90s commercial values may be predictable, but they are no less attractive for that. And it is interesting to observe how the film is able to make these points effectively only by shifting its focus away from the negligent corporation courtroom plot itself and into the domestic sphere.

It's obvious from the outset that Maggie doesn't stand a chance in the Oedipal rivalry with her father, whose heart is in the right place, who has a lovely, sympathetically scruffy office, and a lovely, sympathetically unfashionable house, and who doesn't even cheat on his wife any more. When Maggie starts eyeing up his gorgeous new secretary suspiciously, she's suitably chastened to learn that the woman is a dyke. But one of the film's many strengths is that, while it can't do much about the inevitability of Maggie's coming round to see things her father's way, it works hard to show why it takes her so long to do so.

Her own work place is of course high-tech and brutalist, but it is full of decent, witty people who like and, within professional limitations, care about each other. Even her lover, Mike, is not so much evil as just a careless operator who happens to get caught. And, cleverly, Maggie's own apartment, though more stylish than her parents', is a lot cosier than the sort that successful young corporate lawyers usually seem to inhabit in the movies. In a tight and subtle script that is a character actor's dream, Gene Hackman dominates as Jed, charismatic and committed at work, selfish and insensitive at home. Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is fine, but loses credibility a little by doing a vacuous Julia Roberts gawk at points of high emotion. Supporting roles skilfully carry the San Francisco local colour and funny bits that give the film its charm – in particular a perfectly formed performance from Larry Fishburne, a great black actor spoiling for a part in something really big.

**Jenny Turner**



# A dama do cine Shanghai (The Lady from the Shanghai Cinema)



Movie-fed: Antonio Fagundes, Maite Proença

## Certificate

15

## Distributor

Metro Pictures  
**Production Company**  
Star Films  
In association with  
Raiz, Embrafilme,  
Secretaria de Estado  
da Cultura, Chroma,  
Loc-ALL, Maite  
Proença, Antonio  
Fagundes

## Executive Producer

Mauro Porrino

## Producer

Assunção Hernandez

## Production Supervisor

Sara Silveira

## Assistant Director

Ricardo Pintoe Silva

## Directors of Photography

Cláudio Portioli

José Roberto Eliezer

## Camera Operators

Lito Mendes da Rocha

Gyula Kolozsvári

Jacob Solitrenick

Nei Santi Junior

Odair Guarani

## Optical Effects

Eduardo Henrique

B. Cestari

Editor:

Jair Garcia Duarte

## Production Designer

Hector Gomez

## Music

Hermelino Neder

## Music Performed by

Ricardo Breim

Vander Galvez

Maurício Zidoi

Pedro Mourão

Paulo Tatit

Akira Veno

## Musical Arrangements

Hermelino Neder

Paulo Tatit

Akira Veno

## Songs

"Sky of My Blues" by

Hermelino Neder,

Arrigo Barnabé,

Carlos Rennó;

"Sophisticated Lady"

by Irving Mills,

Mitchel Parish, Duke

Ellington, performed

by Augustode Campos;

"Cor de Cinza" by

Noel Rosa, performed

by Hermelino Neder,

instrumental

arrangement Helio

Ziskind; "Honda" by

Anata Sagashite,

Paulo Vanzolini, Laura

Okomura, performed

by Laura Okomura,

arranged by Paulo

Tatit, Helio Ziskind

## Wardrobe

Cida Martins

## Make-Up

Plínio Peloso

## Sound Recordists

Jorge Poulson

Helio Ziskind

## Sound Re-recordists

Roberto Leite

Luis de Lima

Rob Filmes

## Sound Effects

Márcio Jacovani

## Adviser

Nadia K. Velecio

## Production Assistants

Paulo Rogério

Viviane Guimarães

Magda Strass

Manuel Batista de

Nascimento

Djalma Castor da Silva

Glavco Rodrigues

Bueno

Luis Humberto

de Souza Martins

Marcos Madaleno

Set:

Maria José de Oliveira

João de Bartolo

Rudge Schwerther

Orlando Megalhães

Renata Almeida

## Film Extracts

*The Lady from*

*Shanghai* (1948)

## Cast

**Maite Proença**

Suzana

**Antonio Fagundes**

Lucas

**José Lewgoy**

Linus

**Jorge Doria**

Velho

**José Mayer**

Bolívar

**Miguel Falabella**

Lana

**Paulo Villaca**

Walter Desdino

**Sergio Mamberti**

Stan

**Helena Imara Reis**

Lyla Van/Sabrina/

Carmen/Lanterninha/

Ines

**John Doo**

Chuang

**Julio Calasso Jnr**

Dum-Dum

**João Bourbonnais**

Reporter

**Carlos Takeshi**

Japanese Man

**Athos Taddeo**

Decorator

**Luis Fernando**

**Daniachi**

Lawyer

**Rodrigo Argollo**

**Jair Assumpção**

**An Vaniche**

**Regina Rheda**

**Julia Pascale**

**Chachimbo**

**Patricia Gaspar**

**Maria Alberto**

**Ivana Messina**

**Monica Reis**

**Miguel Falabella**

**Matilde Mastrangi**

**Liana Duval**

**Julio Levy**

**Macalé dos Santos**

**Sergio de Oliveira**

**Tião Hoover**

## Voices:

Susana de Moraes

Maristela Morena

Jayme Periard

Turibio Ruiz

Caio Fernando

Abreu

Joao Batista

de Andrade

10,494 feet

117 minutes

## Subtitles

## Spain 1988

## Director:

**Guilherme De Almeida Prado**

In a cinema showing a B-movie remake of *Double Indemnity*, estate agent and ex-boxer Lucas catches the eye of a woman who resembles the film's *femme fatale* heroine. The next day, the woman, Suzana, and her husband view a flat being let by Lucas' agency, and she arranges to meet Lucas at the Chuang Tzu Chinese restaurant. While Lucas waits in vain, Orson Welles' *The Lady from Shanghai* flickers on the bar TV. The next day, Lucas' boss tells him that Suzana's husband, who gave a false name, is in fact a famous lawyer, Walter Desdino, rumoured to be involved in drug trafficking.

Desdino's last client was film producer Jorge Miraldo – to whom Lucas' boss had lent money to make the film Lucas saw earlier – who was murdered only the night before. Obsessed with Suzana, Lucas haunts the Chuang Tzu restaurant. One night, he is mistaken for a local gangster and taken by a group of hoods to a deserted warehouse, where he sees a sailor called "Mickey" murdered. At the scene, Lucas finds halfburned pictures of a woman who resembles Suzana. When Lucas confronts Suzana at the flat, she at first shrugs him off; but when her husband returns with a young naval officer, Fillipe Moraldo, for whom the flat was purchased, she kisses Lucas and then hides him.

After the two men leave, Lucas falls asleep and is woken later by Suzana, who shows him a newspaper headline accusing him of the sailor's murder. Suzana says the half-burned photos are of an actress named Lyla Van and agrees to help Lucas find out who 'Mickey' was. Picking the name Mickevicius from the phone book and gatecrashing a wedding party proves a dead end. But Lucas follows up a classified ad for an office to rent, with the contact name Mickey, and

finds the body of a man named Miguel, a drug user who apparently had dealings with a man fitting Desdino's description.

After watching Desdino, Fillipe and Suzana dance suggestively together, and still unsure whether he can trust Suzana, Lucas schemes with her to kill Desdino. Entering the flat later that night, Lucas shoots and kills a silhouetted figure; the dead man, though, turns out to be Fillipe. Desdino appears from the darkness to kill Lucas and reveals that Suzana is really Lyla Van. Shots ring out and a man wearing Desdino's hat emerges from the room to embrace Suzana. As the man, Lucas, reaches up to switch off the light, Suzana raises a knife behind his back... Lucas emerges from the Shanghai Cinema.

Drawing on the convoluted plotting and iconography of *film noir*, this languorously paced and stylishly shot Brazilian feature aspires to the level of post-modern critique but remains trapped in post-modern pastiche. Immediately before Desdino reveals that Suzana is the actress Lyla Van, the film appears to catch in the projector and burn out, reinforcing previous hints that Lucas is no longer able to distinguish between everyday reality and the fantasy world of his movie-fed imagination. False clues, mistaken identities and dead ends proliferate. The problem is that this spiralling confusion acts as a fictive centrifuge, throwing things randomly in all directions. Filmic references abound, but what, if anything, does this add to our understanding of the conventions the film so lovingly evokes? References to *noir* classics such as *Detour* and *Gilda* flash across the film's seductively glossy surface. But as in the hall of mirrors climax of *The Lady from Shanghai*, the images seem only to multiply the receding reflections of themselves.

**Nigel Floyd**



Hall of mirrors: Maite Proença



# Edward Scissorhands

## Certificate

PG

## Distributor

20th Century Fox

## Production Company

20th Century Fox

## Executive Producer

Richard Hashimoto

## Producers

Denise Di Novi

Tim Burton

## Associate Producer

Caroline Thompson

## Production

Co-ordinator

Mary Cay Hollander

## LA Production

## Liaison

Marcia Klemm

## Unit Production

Manager

Bill P. Scott

## Location Managers

Robert Maharis

Michael J. Burmeister

## Casting

Victoria Thomas

Associate:

Jory Weitz

Extras, Florida:

Rose Rosen

Tina M. Boergesson

## Assistant Directors

Jerry Fleck

Francis Conway

Margaret Nelson

## Screenplay

Caroline Thompson

## Story

Tim Burton

Caroline Thompson

## Director of

Photography

Stefan Czapsky

## Colour

DeLuxe

## Visual Effects

Photography

Bill Neil

## Camera Operator

Frank Miller

## Steadicam Operator

Robert Ulland

## Supervising Video

Engineer

Ian Kelly

## Visual Effects

VCE

Peter Kuran

## Editor

Richard Halsey

Film:

Colleen Halsey

## Production Designer

Bo Welch

## Art Director

Tom Duffield

## Art Department

Co-ordinators

John Rosengrant

Shane Patrick Mahan

## Set Design

Rick Heinrichs

Paul Sonski

Ann Harris

## Set Decorator

Cheryl Carasik

## Set Dressers

David Manhan

Stephen I. Erdberg

## Illustrator

Jack Johnson

## Textile Artist

Phyllis Thurber-

Moffitt

## Scissorhand Effects

Stan Winston Studio

## Sculptors

Lead:

Jaroslav G. Alfer

Art Department:

Leo Rijn

## Stan Winston's Art

Department Crew

David Anderson

Len E. Burge III

Mitch Coughlin

Dave Grasso

Kevin Hudson

Karen Mason

Mark "Crash"

McCreery

Michael Spatola

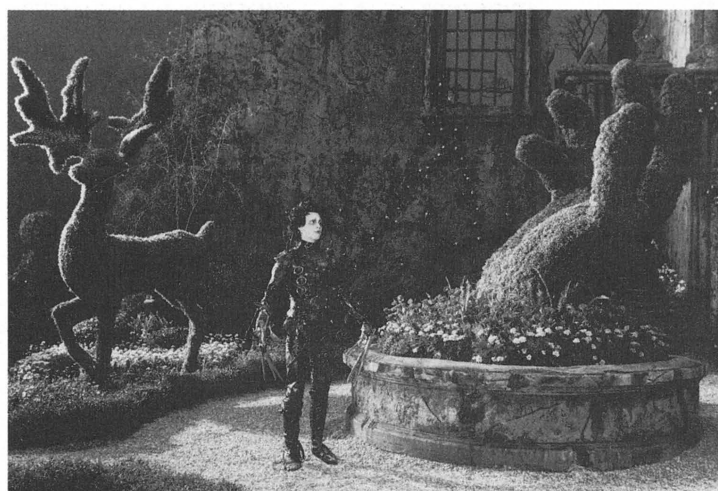
Ian Stevenson

Bill Basso

John Coen

Bruce Spaulding

Fuller



Playtime: Johnny Depp

Beth Hathaway

Adam Jones

Curt Massof

Andy Schoneberg

Samantha Stevens

Rob Watson

## Special Effects

Supervisor

Michael Wood

## Special Effects

Michael Arbogast

David Wood

Brian Wood

James Reedy

Gary Schaedler

## Mechanical

Department

Co-ordinator:

Richard J. Landon

On-set:

Jon Curtis Price

Andy Schoneberg

Crew:

Evan Brainard

Guy Himber

Craig Caton-Largent

Jon Curtis Price

Mark Rappaport

## Models

Chief:

George Trimmer

Key:

Leslie Ekker

Henry Gonzalez

Thomas Griep

Ian Hunter

Laurel Lichten

Bradford Plows

Dennis Schultz

George Willis

Dana Yurichich

Lead Painter:

Ron Gress

## Miniatures

Stetson Visual

Services

Robert Spurlock

Mark Stetson

Lead Special Effects:

Terry King

## Music

Danny Elfman

## Music Director

Shirley Walker

## Music Performed by

Organ:

O-Lan Jones

Boys Choir:

Paulist Boys Choristers

of California, directed

by Dr. Jon

Wattenbarger

## Orchestrations

Steve Bartek

## Music Editor

Bob Badami

## Songs

"Blue Hawaii" by Leo

Robin, Ralph Rainger;

"It's Not Unusual" by

Gordon Mills, Les

Reed, performed by

Tom Jones; "Delilah"

by Les Reed, Barry

Mason, performed by

Tom Jones; "With

These Hands" by

Benny Davis, Abner

Silver, performed by

Tom Jones

## Costume

Design:

Colleen Atwood

Supervisor:

Ray Summers

## Wardrobe

Kathryn "Bird"

## Key Costumers

Women:

Nancy McArdle

Men:

David Davenport

## Make-up

Head:

Ve Neill

Artists:

Matthew W. Mungle

Selena Miller

Brad Wilder

Rick Stratton

Dianne Wiest:

Fern Buckner

## Special Make-up

Effects

Stan Winston Studio

## Title Design

Robert Dawson

## Supervising Sound

Editors

Richard L. Anderson

David Stone

## Sound Editors

Michael J. Benavente

Warren Hamilton Jnr

James Christopher

## ADR Editor

Mary Andrews

## Foley Editor

Mike Chock

## Sound Recordists

Gary Ritchie

Kathy McCart

Peter Hliddal

Music:

Shawn Murphy

Susan McLean

## Foley Recordist

Robert Deschaine

Dolby stereo

## Sound Re-recordists

Steve Maslow

Stanley Kastner

## Sound Effects

Special:

John P.

Recordist:

Eric Potter

## Foley

Vanessa T. Ament

Heather McPherson

## Production

Assistants

Special Effects:

Michael Umble

Set:

Glenn Williamson

Office:

Steven C. Ward

Kelly Rae Fry

## Stunt Co-ordinator

Glenn R. Wilder

## Stunts

Greg Anderson

Tammy Brady-Conrad

Todd Bryant

David Burton

Gary Rev. Price

Lori Lynn Ross

Gar Stephen

Bill Suiter

Scott Wilder

John Zimmerman

## Animal Trainers

Sled Reynolds

David Allsberry

Boone Nar

## Cast

Johnny Depp

Edward Scissorhands

Winona Ryder

Kim Boggs

Dianne Wiest

Peg Boggs

Anthony Michael

Hall

Jim

Kathy Baker

Joyce Monroe

Robert Oliveri

Kevin Boggs

Conchata Ferrell

Helen

Caroline Aaron

Marge

Dick Anthony

Williams

Officer Allen

O-Lan Jones

Esmeralda

Vincent Price

The Inventor



with talons refashioned for the Freddy Krueger age. Defeating expectations, however, Edward Scissorhands proves to be a vulnerable, reticent figure, mild-mannered and ingratiating with Chaplinesque pallor and toddle, an innocent inconveniently armed with appendages slightly beyond his control.

Tolerantly good-natured (like Pee-Wee Herman), haunted by the death of his father (like Batman), Edward Scissorhands is a disruptive force with unusual skills, destined (like Beetlejuice) for an inevitable exile. But in the wake of *Batman*, the problem is that Edward's outing seems a touch lightweight. Where Gotham City was a gaunt labyrinth of duplicity and decay, the Florida suburb of *Scissorhands*, decked out in pastel conformity, has the simple satirical hues of Tati's *Playtime*, with similar shots of a daily routine in which all the cars in the street convey identikit "Stepford husbands" (an apt description by Alan Arkin, who plays one) to or from their identikit families.

The period is early 1960s, beautifully resurrected by Bo Welch's designs as a wasteland of anonymity and kitsch. But instead of being exploited as the disguise for unimaginable horrors, the bland surface disappointingly conceals nothing more than a bland interior. Lacking the disarmingly parodic naivety of Pee-Wee's intricate universe, or the barmy extravagance of Beetlejuice's supernatural pantomime, *Scissorhands* remains too often at the level of a prefabricated nursery story, typified by tinkling music and pretty (although elusively ironic) shots of falling snow.

In this context, it's hard not to puzzle over why Edward's inventor (who has remarkably outreached Frankenstein on far slimmer resources) should equip his android with an array of lethal blades, or how his mansion, overlooking the town exactly like the 'haunted' house in *Beetlejuice*, is not subjected to endless trespass and investigation. What Tim Burton finds from his story, expanded to a screenplay by Caroline Thompson (who has since, significantly, turned her hand to the Addams Family), is the opportunity to tinker with images and apparitions in a kind of expanded Toytown, a deliriously bizarre setting for the ungainly and doll-like Scissorhands. Magnificently served by his cast (dominated by Dianne Wiest's tremulous sincerity and Alan Arkin's imperturbable monologues), he has fashioned a topiaristic diversion, eye-catching, ingenious, but – apart from its mildly autobiographical implications – ultimately of no great concern.

**Philip Strick**

## Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer



Well balanced: Tracy Arnold, Michael Rooker

### Certificate

18

### Distributor

Electric

### Production Company

Maljack Productions

### Executive Producers

Waleed B. Ali

Malik B. Ali

### Producers

John McNaughton

Lisa Dedmond

Steven A. Jones

### Production Manager

Lisa Dedmond

### Post-production Supervisor

Steven A. Jones

### Casting

Jeffrey Lyle Segal

### Assistant Directors

Paul Chen

Andrew Bradburn

### Screenplay

Richard Fire

John McNaughton

### Director of Photography

Charlie Lieberman

In colour

### Camera Operators

Dave Mahlman

Brad Sellars

### Editor

Elena Maganini

### Art Director

Rick Paul

### Storyboard Artist

Frank Coronado

### Technical Effects

Lee Ditzkowski

### Music

Robert McNaughton

Ken Hale

Steven A. Jones

### Songs

"Too Old for These

Blues", "Lelania",

"Callin' Colleen",

"Jukin", "There's

Another Girl" by T. K.

Thady, performed by

Kid Tater and the

Cheaters; "Lavalite

Waltz" by and

performed by Dan

Haberkorn;

"No Father in the

Family" by R. Szeluga,

M. Whyte,

S. Summers,

performed by E.L.E.I.O.;

"Fingers on It" by

C. Z'Nuff, D. Vie,

performed by Enough

Z'Nuff; "Don't You

Know" by M. Fabus,

S. A. Jones, performed

by Fawn; "Psycho" by

J. Roslie, performed by

The Sonics; "Morning

Dew" by M. Fabus,

R. Young, performed

by Fawn; "My Mistake"

by R. Brandle,

P. Petraitis, performed

by Lynne and the

Lizards

### Costumes

Patricia Hart

### Make-up

Berndt Rantscheff

### Special Make-up

Effects

Jeffrey Lyle Segal

Crew:

Michael J. Alonzi

Scott Whitehead

Herb Nordheimer

### Title Design

Steven A. Jones

David LeBoy

### Sound Editor

Elena Maganini

### Sound Recordist

Thomas T. Yore

### Sound Re-recordist

Rick Coken

### Sound Effects

Dan Haberkorn

### Production

Assistant

Bradley Morgan

### Fight Co-ordinator

David Woolley

### Film Extract

Becket (1963)

### Cast

**Michael Rooker**

Henry

**Tracy Arnold**

Becky

**Tom Towles**

Otis

**Mary Demas**

Dead Woman/Dead

Prostitute/Hooker

**Anne Bartoletti**

Waitress

**Elizabeth Kaden**

**Ted Kaden**

Dead Couple

**Denise Sullivan**

Floating Woman

**Anita Ores**

**Megan Ores**

**Cheri Jones**

Mall Shoppers

**Monica Anne**

**O'Malley**

Mall Victim

**Bruce Quist**

Husband

**Erzsebet Sziky**

Hitch-hiker

**David Katz**

Henry's Boss

**John Scafidi**

**Benjamin Passman**

Kids with Football

**Flo Spink**

Woman in Cadillac

**Kurt Naebig**

High-school Jock

**Kristin Finger**

Hooker

**Lily Monkus**

Woman in Beauty

Shop

**Ray Atherton**

Fence

**Eric Young**

Parole Officer

**Rick Paul**

Shooting Victim

**Peter Van Wagner**

**Tom McKearn**

**Frank Coranado**

Bums

**Lisa Temple**

**Brian Graham**

**Sean Ores**

Murdered Family

**Pamela Fox**

Hair Stylist

**Waleed B. Ali**

Store Clerk

**Donna Dunlap**

Dog Walker

**Augie the Dog**

Delores

**7,336 feet**

**82 minutes**

**Original running**

**time - 83 minutes**

## USA 1986

**Director: John McNaughton**

Chicago. Henry, who has served out a prison sentence for murdering his prostitute mother when he was fourteen, works fitfully as an exterminator, and murders strangers, mostly women. Becky, who escaped from her abusive father by marrying an abusive husband, comes to Chicago to escape her marriage, and moves in with her brother Otis, an ex-convict who deals drugs and shares an apartment with his former prison friend Henry. Becky and Henry share their respective traumas, but Henry forms a closer tie with Otis, whom he initiates into the pleasures of murder by taking him along on a spree that ends with the killing of two prostitutes.

Henry explains his methods for remaining at large to Otis – he varies his modus operandi and always keeps on the move – and Otis becomes more enthusiastic about serial killing. He casually murders a passerby to ease his frustration after one of his high-school drug clients has violently rejected his sexual come-on, and participates in the murder of a fence, from whom the pair then steal a cam-corder. Henry and Otis watch a video they have made of their murder of a middle-class couple and their son, during which Henry is disgusted when Otis tries to molest the dead woman. Later, the pair argue over an accident which smashes up the cam-corder.

Becky, who is unaware of the pair's crimes, tells Henry that she plans to return to her child – her husband being in jail on a murder charge with a million-dollar bail – and asks him to come with her, initiating a sexual encounter that is cut short by Otis' return home. Henry goes out for cigarettes and returns to find Otis raping his sister, whereupon he attacks him. Becky saves Henry from Otis' murder attempt by stabbing him in the eye with a comb, and Henry kills Otis, dismembering his body for easy disposal. Henry and Becky leave the city, and check into a motel. But the next morning, Henry leaves alone, depositing a bleeding suitcase by the roadside...

Exceptionally well-acted and shot for a zero-budget movie, and resolutely unexploitative in its approach, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* marked a distinctive debut for John McNaughton, who has subsequently made the still-shelved s-f horror picture *The Borrower* and is working under the supervision of producer Martin Scorsese on a Robert De Niro gangster saga. The four-year delay between the 1985 conception of *Henry* and its American release, with a further two years between ►



◀ that and its appearance in Britain, means that the movie has run the risk of coming out long after the *cognoscenti* have elevated it to cult status and the creative personnel have joined, albeit ambiguously, the mainstream. Even lead actor Michael Rooker, taking his first major role as Henry, has in the years since this performance become a familiar face with villainous roles in *Eight Men Out*, *Mississippi Burning* and *Sea of Love*.

Henry is loosely based on real-life convicted mass murderer Henry Lee Lucas who has, as is admitted in a recently added pre-credits caption, recanted many of the confessions that served as the basis of the film, and also criticised from prison the whole enterprise of making a movie about his alleged crimes. This is an unflinching portrait not only of its eponymous killer but of the world that at once turns him into what he is and allows him to get away with it. The product of an unspecified childhood trauma whose details change each time he recalls it, Henry, whose behaviour has not been modified by unsuccessful institutionalisation, drifts from job to job, murdering women whenever the mood takes him. In the powerful opening sequence (only slightly blunted by minimal BBFC cuts), the camera pans across the bodies of Henry's latest victims while their torture murders are heard on the soundtrack.

The minimal plot unnervingly bears out Elliott Leyton's musing in *Hunting Humans*, the definitive anthropological study of the phenomenon of serial killers, that the stresses which produce such aberrant behaviour are so widespread that it is surprising so few serial killers stalk America's streets. Henry is compared constantly with Otis, whose increasing delight in all-round depravity shocks and disturbs even Henry, perhaps because his verminous presence gives the lie to Henry's neutral sham decency, forcing the killer to recognise his own monstrosity.

Even the sub-title - which deliberately excludes Otis from consideration, unlike the co-murderers of *The Honeymoon Killers* or *The Case of the Hillside Stranglers* - suggests that Henry counts for more than Otis. The latter's sexual degeneracy, expressed through rape, incest and necrophilia, conflicts with Henry's almost respectful, joyless recreations of the murder of his mother, who has made the whole notion of sexual congress beyond consideration for him by performing in front of his younger self with her clients.

The most deeply disturbing moments are perhaps the quieter sequences that bracket the killings, as when Henry pulls Otis out of the

shock that follows their first, swift murders by offering him coffee and fries and bringing him back to a resolutely ordinary life. However, the film's strongest, hardest-to-sit-through sequence is the videotaped home invasion which, when the image becomes static because Henry has dropped the camera on its side so he can kill the interloping son, strongly recalls *A Clockwork Orange* and the torture, murder and sexual abuse as seen by the Patrick Magee character.

The impact of this scene depends on an audience's instinctive wish to turn away from the material Henry and Otis blankly watch on their television. The most horrific moment is Otis' line, "I want to watch it again", which leads him to reshow on frame-advance the sequence of images an audience must be relieved to think is over. McNaughton's camera homes in threateningly on the television image, holding it for a horrifying few seconds before the tactful fade to the film's one calming-down scene, Becky talking to her child on the telephone.

Henry - who develops genuine if peculiar relationships - seems to be the most normal, well-balanced person in the film, but he is made even more chilling by his matter-of-fact explanations of his life style. After the horrors of the home invasion and Otis' killings, McNaughton is even able to pull off an ambiguous but shattering finale. Henry literally dumps the girl who might have been his only chance for normality by the roadside, and disappears into the American vacuum from which he emerged in the beginning, to kill and kill again without hindrance. What makes this seem so inevitable is that - unlike the Thomas Harris-derived films and other entries in the serial-killer cycle - Henry has no interest whatsoever in the cocktail of issues that surround the killings. It never cuts away to the police, the media or the politicians, suggesting that Henry has gone undetected for years because of his evasive actions.

This narrowing of focus to the unbearable means that the film is far more likely to be targeted for adverse criticism or censorious pressure (it was initially given the prohibitive 'X' rating in the US for "general tone") than *The Silence of the Lambs*, which for all its qualities is a conventional 'entertainment'. Henry consciously incorporates into its own strategy the viewer's inevitable reactions against what is on screen. This renders it a far more challenging, uncomfortable and honourable approach to real-life horrors than any attempt to dress up its psychological or sociological subject matter with thriller or horror-movie trappings might have been.

**Kim Newman**

## Hudson Hawk

**Certificate**  
(Not yet issued)  
**Distributor**  
Columbia Tri-Star  
**Production Companies**  
Silver Pictures/Ace  
Bone  
For Tri-Star  
**Executive Producer**  
Robert Kraft  
**Producer**  
Joel Silver  
**Co-producer**  
Michael Dryhurst  
**Associate Producers**  
David Willis  
Suzanne Todd  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
Anne Nevin  
Rae Griffith  
Rome:  
Franca Tasso  
Budapest:  
Gabor Dobos  
Los Angeles:  
Melissa Pray  
Visual Effects:  
Rae Griffith  
**Production Managers**  
Rome:  
Paolo Lucidi  
Budapest:  
Hugh Harlow  
Jack Phelan  
Maria Ungor  
**Unit Production Managers**  
New York:  
David August Starke  
Los Angeles:  
Lynn H. Guthrie  
2nd Unit:  
Carlos Barbieri  
**Location Managers**  
Rome:  
Giovanni Lovatelli  
Budapest:  
Gyorgy Kuntner  
Los Angeles:  
Allen Tinkley  
**Post-production Producer**  
Mark S. Miller  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Charles Picerni  
**Casting**  
Jackie Burch  
Extras:  
Joy Todd  
**Assistant Directors**  
Michael Alan Kahn  
Bob Girolami  
New York:  
Timothy Lonsdale  
Julie A. Bloom  
Rome:  
Enrico Coletti  
Francesco Papa  
Budapest:  
Gabor Nagy  
Los Angeles:  
Barbara N. Franks  
2nd Unit:  
Edoardo Margheriti  
**Screenplay**  
Steven E. de Souza  
Daniel Waters  
**Story**  
Bruce Willis  
Robert Kraft  
**Director of Photography**  
Dante Spinotti  
**Colour**  
Technicolor  
**2nd Unit Photography**  
Giuseppe Maccari  
**Effects Photography**  
Paul Wilson  
**Camera Operators**  
Louis Barlia  
Visual Effects:  
Pete Kozachik  
John Morgan  
Jonathan Taylor  
Angus Bickerton  
Rome:  
Alberico Novelli  
2nd Unit:  
Claudio Nannuzzi  
**Optical Camera Operators**  
Keith Johnson  
Kenneth Smith  
**Steadicam Operator**  
Elizabeth Ziegler  
**Video Playback**  
Peter Hodgson  
**Process Projection Supervisor**  
Bill Hansard  
**Process Projection Co-ordinator**  
Donald R. Hansard Jnr  
**Special Visual Effects Supervisor**  
John Knoll  
**Visual Effects Producer**  
Kimberley K. Nelson  
**Optical Photography Supervisor**  
Brad Kuehn  
**Visual Effects Plate Supervisor**  
Michael Owens  
**Effects Camera Supervisor**  
Patrick T. Myers  
**Visual Effects Editor**  
Michael McGovern  
**Visual Effects and Miniatures Producer:**  
Roger Lofting  
The Magic Camera Company  
**Visual Effects and Miniatures Supervisor**  
Derek Meddings  
**Animation**  
Chris Green  
**Rotoscope Supervisor**  
Rebecca A. P. Heskes  
**Rotoscope Artists**  
Terry Molatore  
Sandy Houston  
**Optical Line-up**  
Tom Rosseter  
Jennifer Lee  
**Editors**  
Chris Lebenzon  
Michael Tronick  
**Production Designer**  
Jack DeVivia  
**Art Directors**  
John R. Jensen  
New York:  
William Woods  
Mackintosh  
Visual Effects:  
José Granell  
**Art Department Co-ordinator**  
Beth Jasper  
**Set Designers**  
Alessandro Alberti  
Maria Teresa Barbasso  
Giacomo Calo  
Carducci  
Nazzareno Piana  
Massimo Razzi  
**Set Decorators**  
New York:  
Kathleen Dolan-Giorgini  
Rome:  
Francesco Chianese  
Los Angeles:  
Dan May  
**Set Dressers**  
New York:  
John Oates Jnr  
Los Angeles:  
John E. Spina  
**Scenic Artist**  
New York:  
Michael Zansky  
**Storyboard Artists**  
Michael Anthony Jackson  
John L. Jensen  
Nikita Knatz



**Burglar and bully:**  
**Bruce Willis**

**Special Effects Supervisor**  
Derek Meddings  
**Senior Effects Technician**  
Chris Corbould  
**Special Effects**  
Steven Cullane  
Paul Knowles  
Shawn Rutter  
Brian Warner  
Andy Williams  
New York:  
Connie Brink  
Rome:  
Gino De Rossi  
Budapest:  
Gabor Budahazi  
Gold Machine  
Supervisor:  
Philip Norman Stokes  
Gold Machine Crew:  
Trevor Antony  
Butterfield  
Neil Davis  
Rodney Malcolm  
Fuller  
Francis John Guiney  
John Stewart Hatt  
**Pyrotechnics**  
Budapest:  
Gyula Krasnyansky  
**Models**  
Robert Scott  
**Music**  
Michael Kamen  
Robert Kraft  
**Music Director**  
Michael Kamen  
**Electronic Music Programming**  
Steve McLaughlin  
Dan Stein  
Christopher S. Brooks  
**Orchestrations**  
Jack Hayes  
Chris Boardman  
Don Davis  
Lolita Ritmanix  
Albert Olsen  
Stu Balcomb  
Jonathan Sacks  
Brad Dechter  
Mark Waters  
Harvey Cohen  
**Music Supervisor**  
Robert Kraft  
**Supervising Music Editor**  
Christopher S. Brooks





#### Songs

"Hudson Hawk Theme" by Bruce Willis, Robert Kraft, performed by Dr John, (instrumental) performed by Robert Kraft; "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Bob Crewe, Bob Gaudio; "Body Heat" by Deanna Brown, Deidra Brown, Yamma Brown, performed by James Brown; "Hail to the Chief" arranged by Jerry Goldsmith; "The Hokey Pokey" by L. Laprise, C. Macak, T. Baker; "Mona Lisa" by Jay Livingston, Ray Evans; "The Name Game" by Lincoln Chase, Shirley Elliston; "The Power" by Benito Benitez, John Garrett III, Toni C. performed by SNAP; "Side by Side" by Harry Woods; "Swinging on a Star" by Johnny Burke, James Van Heusen, performed by Bing Crosby

#### Costume

Design: Marilyn Vance-Straker

Supervisor: Barcie White

#### Costumer

Fabrizio Caracciolo

#### Wardrobe

Rome: Adriana Mattiozzi

Giacoma Mellini

#### Make-up

Supervisor: Scott H. Eddo

Artists: Anna Dryhurst

Richard Snell

#### Special Make-up

##### Effects

Scott H. Eddo  
Thomas R. Burman  
Bari Dreiband-Burman

##### Title Design

Richard Greenberg  
Bruce Schluter

##### Opticals

Stokes/Kohne  
Associates  
Cinema Research Corporation

##### Supervising Sound

##### Editor

Jerry Ross

##### Sound Editors

Hugo Weng  
Karen Wilson

##### ADR Supervisor

George Berndt

##### ADR Editors

Lauren Palmer

Bill Voigtlander

Susan Dudeck

##### Foley Editors

Mark Pappas

Christopher Flick

John Duval

##### Sound Recordists

Matt Patterson

Ren Borisowitz

2nd Unit:

A. H. Coletta

New York:

Peter Ilardi

Los Angeles:

Glenn Anderson

##### ADR Recordists

Charleen Richards

Riley Steele

##### Foley Recordist

Greg Orloff

Dolby stereo

##### Sound Re-recordists

Kevin O'Connell

Rick Kline

Additional:

Michael Minkler

Gregg Landaker

##### Sound Effects

Editors

Michael J. Benavente

Scott Hecker

Dave Kulczycki

John Morris

Rodger Pardee

Peter Sullivan

##### Foley Artists

Dan O'Connell

Alicia Stevenson

##### Production

Assistants

Craig Pinckes

#### Visual Effects:

Stephanie Jaffee

##### Stunt Co-ordinator

Charles Picerni

##### Stunt Liaison

2nd Unit:

Franco Salamon

##### Stunts

Danny Aiello III

Peter Antico

Ken Bates

John Cade

John S. Cenatiempo

Frank Ferrara

Tony Guida

Keii Johnston

Tom Morga

Claudio Pacifico

Charles Picerni Jr

Steve Picerni

Laura Santoni

Tierre Turner

Webster Whinery

Chuck Zito

##### Dog Trainer

Massimo Perla

##### "Flying Pictures"

##### Helicopter Crew

David Paris

Stephen North

##### "Spacecam" Crew

Ron Goodman

Steven Sass

Attila Szalay

##### Armourer

Karl Schmidt

##### Cast

**Bruce Willis**

Hudson Hawk

**Danny Aiello**

Tommy Five-Tone

**Andie MacDowell**

Anna Baragli

**James Coburn**

George Kaplan

**Richard E. Grant**

Darwin Mayflower

**Sandra Bernhard**

Minerva Mayflower

**Donald Burton**

Alfred

**Don Harvey**

Snickers

**David Caruso**

Kit Kat

#### Andrew Bryniarski

Butterfinger

**Lorraine Toussaint**

Almond Joy

**Burt Harris**

Gates

**Frank Stallone**

Cesar Mario

**Carmine Zozorra**

Antony Mario

**Stephano Molinari**

Leonardo da Vinci

**Enrico Lo Verso**

Apprentice

**Remo Remotti**

Guy on Donkey

**Giselda Volodi**

Mona Lisa

**P. Randall Bowers**

Prison Clerk

**Arthur M. Wolpinsky**

Prison Security Guard

**Frank Page**

Mario's Driver

**Bob Vazquez**

Big Stan

**Michael Klastorin**

Dean

**Scott H. Eddo**

Jerry

**John Savident**

Auctioneer

**Lisa Reich**

Girl in Car

**John Lucantonio**

Vatican Guards

**Courtenay Semel**

Bratty Kid

**Massimo Ciprari**

The Pope

**Doug Martin**

Igg

**Steve Martin**

Look

**Leonardo Cimino**

Cardinal

**Giangiacomo Colli**

Waiter

**Frank Welker**

Bunny the Dog

**William Conrad**

Narrator

**8,984 feet**

**100 minutes**

## USA 1991

### Director: Michael Lehmann

● Notorious cat burglar Hudson Hawk has just been released from Sing Sing when his parole officer, Gates, proposes that he steal a valuable equestrian statuette by Leonardo da Vinci from a New York auction house. Hawk turns him down, but his old partner Tommy Five-Tone later makes him the same offer, and when Hawk arrives at the neighbourhood bar which he and Tommy run, he is finally convinced by a pair of threatening mafiosi, the Mario brothers, to pull the job.

Having estimated that the heist will take the length of time it takes to play the old Bing Crosby hit, "Swinging on a Star", Hawk and Tommy sing and dance to the number while breaking into the safe, grabbing the statue and fleeing the guards. When Hawk turns over the statue to the Mario brothers and Gates, they are joined by a menacing Englishman, Alfred, who takes the horse and then kills Gates with a folding sword. When the newspapers report that the theft was a failure, and that the auction will go ahead, Hawk turns up and sits next to the beautiful Dr Anna Baragli, an art expert from the Vatican.

Bidding is disrupted by the sudden arrival of Darwin and Minerva Mayflower, who each bid over one hundred million dollars. A bomb goes off and Hawk is knocked out by a flying horse statue, waking in an ambulance to find himself the prisoner of the Mario brothers. He escapes, and the ambulance crashes and goes up in flames, but Hawk then falls into the hands of gaudy post-punk CIA agents led by George Kaplan. He is knocked out and despatched in a crate to Rome, where the Mayflowers tell him that the horse theft was just a test, and that they want him to steal a da Vinci codex with instructions on how to assemble and operate an alchemical crystal which can turn lead into gold.

Hawk reluctantly agrees and goes to the Vatican museum where the book is on display. There he is seized by Anna and taken to a meeting with



Sub-genre: Richard E. Grant, Sandra Bernhard

a Vatican cardinal/counter-intelligence officer, who explains the Mayflowers' scheme for world domination and Kaplan's complicity. Hawk is later further coerced by Kaplan and his gang and successfully robs the museum; at the Mayflowers' headquarters, where Hawk refuses to continue stealing crystal parts, Tommy turns up and reveals that he has been in on the conspiracy. The two old partners later escape and flee in a Vatican ambulance with Anna. Kaplan and his gang subsequently kidnap Anna and leave Hawk and Tommy to be blown up; but the two turn the tables on their captors, and head for da Vinci's old castle where the Mayflowers hope to make Anna decipher the codex. In the ensuing struggle, Hawk and Tommy triumph over the Mayflowers and Kaplan, rescue Anna and destroy the alchemy machine.

● If the plot of *Hudson Hawk* sounds familiar, and the presence of *Our Man Flint*'s James Coburn strikes a reminiscent chord, it's because the film is a direct descendant of that dimly remembered and unlamented sub-genre, the Bond send-up. To its credit is Jack DeGovia's production design which, from the evocation of dignified Renaissance sketches in the prologue to the starched white interiors of arriviste modern Rome, invests the film with far more mood and feeling than the frantic overplaying or the indifferent *mise en scène*. Cinematographer Dante Spinotti meanwhile wraps the action in loose-fitting compositions whose distant perspectives and electrified pastels have an almost giddy sense of airy freedom, perfect complements to the film's ostensible tale of radical individualism.

But even these singular virtues are nearly drowned by Bruce Willis' smarmily self-indulgent performance. Despite his own frequent lapses of judgment, Willis' smart-aleck cat burglar assails the equally frequent vacuities of his friends and foes with the assurance of the bar-room bully, inviting us all to join in the shallow cruelties. The self-professed trademark of producer Joel Silver has always been the stupendous stunt, yet here all he and neophyte director Michael Lehmann can contribute are some run-of-the-mill falls, a few languorous escapes down dangling ropes, and a handful of meek explosions. Obviously the film-makers were after the tongue-in-cheek tone of Blake Edwards, Stanley Donen and even Alfred Hitchcock (why else name Coburn's character after *North by Northwest*'s straw man?). But Willis, Silver and Lehmann have confused fun with frivolity and seriousness with sobriety.

Henry Sheehan



## Certificate

18

## Distributor

Rank

## Production Company

King of New York  
Film Corporation  
For Reteitalia/Scena  
Film. An Augusto  
Caminito film

## Executive Producers

Jay Julien  
Vittorio Squillante

## Producer

Mary Kane

## Associate Producer

Randy Sabusawa

## Production

Supervisor  
Diana Phillips

## Production

Co-ordinator  
Susan Rosenberg

## Production Manager

Mary Kane

## Location Supervisor

K. C. Schulberg

## 2nd Unit Director

Phil Neilson

## Casting

Randy Sabusawa

## Extras:

Meredith Jacobson

## Assistant Directors

David Sardi  
Drew Rosenberg  
Gerald Cuesta

## Screenplay

Nicholas St John

## Director of

Photography  
Bojan Bazelli

## Colour

DuArt

## Additional Camera

Operator  
Henry Lynk

## Video Editor

Chris Andrews

## Editor

Anthony Redman

## Production Designer

Alex Tavoularis

## Art Director

Stephanie Ziemer

## Set Decorator

Sonja Roth

## Storyboard Artist

Matt Golden

## Special Effects

Co-ordinator  
Matt Vogel

## Music

Joe Delia

## Music Extract

"Concerto for Violin  
Op.83 Autumn" by  
Antonio Vivaldi,  
arranged by Joe Delia

## Music performed by

David Keyes  
Brian Koonin  
Mark Pender  
Billy Roues  
Jerry Vivino  
Max Weinberg  
Peter Yellen

## Music Editor

Chris Andrews

## Songs

"Am I Black Enough for  
You?", "Saturday Night"  
by and performed by  
Schooly D; "Strivin'" by  
Lavaba T. Lewis,  
performed by Party  
Posse; "Dream On" by  
Delia St John,  
performed by Freddy  
Jackson; "Rockabilly  
Willy" by Ferrara,  
performed by Haywood  
Gregory; "Piece of the  
Rock" by Delia St John,  
Ferrara

## Costume Design

Carol Ramsey

## Associate:

Varcra Russal

## Wardrobe

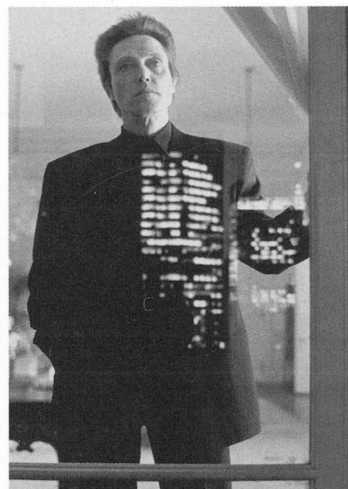
Supervisors  
Marcia Whitney  
Barbara Palmer

## Key Make-up Artist

Carla White

## Supervising Sound

Editor  
Greg Sheldon



Of all he surveys: Christopher Walken

## Sound Editor

Ray Karpicki

## Sound Recordists

Drew Kunin

## Music:

Greg Curry  
Richie Boisis  
Dolby stereo

## Sound Re-recordists

Mel Zelniker

## Sound Effects

Editor  
Paul D. Soucek

## Sound Effects

Eugene Gearty

## Foley Artist

Elisha Birnbaum

## Creative Consultants

John P. McIntyre  
Chris Andrews

## Production

Assistants  
Jeanette Scheibe  
Tony Kono

Kia Puriefoy  
Susan Rossi  
David Yashiv

Joe Zizzo  
John Landt  
Lise Wald

## Stunt Co-ordinator

Phil Neilson

## Stunts

Jim Lovelett  
Sean O'Neill  
Peter Bucossi  
Mick O'Rourke  
Daniel Dod  
Sandy Richman  
Andy Duppin  
Mike Russo  
Roy Farfel  
Manny Siverio  
Jeff Gibson  
Alex Stevens  
Roy Eugene Harrison  
Jeff Ward  
Gino Lucci  
Joel David  
Webster Snr  
Chuck Margiotta  
Bill Anagnos  
Felix Mauras  
Carl Ciarfallo  
Cynthia Neilson  
Frank Ferrara  
Columbo Saggese

## Cast

Christopher Walken  
Frank White  
David Caruso  
Dennis Gilley  
Larry Fishburne  
Jimmy Jump  
Victor Argo  
Lieutenant Bishop  
Wesley Snipes  
Thomas Flanigan  
Janet Julian  
Jennifer  
Joey Chin  
Larry Wong  
Giancarlo Esposito  
Lance  
Paul Calderon  
Joey Dalesio

## Steve Buscemi

Test Tube

## Theresa Randle

Raye

## Leonard Lee

Thomas

Blood

## Roger Smith

Tanner

## Carrie Nygren

Melanie

## Ernest Abuba

King Tito

## Frank Adonis

Paul Calgari

## Vanessa Angel

British Woman

## Butchie Aquilino

Card Player

## David Batiste

Walter Chicken Hut

## Michael Battin

Taxi Driver

## Frankie Cee

Johnny Chick

## Kim Lia Chang

Gangmember

## Endira

Anthony Padilla

Flanigan's Children

## Erica Gimpel

Doctor Shute

## Frank Gio

Arty Clay

## Jack Goode Jnr

Susannah Julien

Palladium Patrons

## Lance Guecia

Musta

## Michael Guess

Carter

## Freddy Howard

Emilio El Zapa

## Nancy Hunter

Millie

## Jay Julien

Abraham Cott

## Robert Lasardo

Guard

## Phoebe Legere

Bordello Woman

## James Lorinz

Tip Conolly

## Gary Landon Mills

Chilly

## Gerald Murphy

Mulligan

## Harold Perrineau

Thug Leader

## George Lawrence

Perry

## Marty Pesci

Palladium

## Peter Richardson

Emperor Jones

## Lonnie Shaw

Kathleen Mulligan

## Wendell Sweda

Man at Breakfast

## Table

## Freddy Jackson

Ariante

## Pete Hamill

Sari Chang

## Special Appearances

9,294 feet  
103 minutes

## USA 1989

## Director: Abel Ferrara

Frank White, a New York drugs baron just released from prison, is escorted by his two female bodyguards to his suite at the Plaza hotel where he is reunited with his gang. (In his absence, his sidekick Jimmy Jump has been taking care of business, most recently murdering a group of Colombian drug traffickers.) White meets up with his attorney Abraham Cott and the latter's partner Jennifer, with whom he is having an affair, and deals personally with a Mafia leader, Arty Clay, who has refused an offer of co-operation.

Later he attends a theatre gala where he lobbies a councillor about a hospital in the South Bronx – his old neighbourhood – that is about to be closed due to lack of funds. He is approached by his arch foe Lieutenant Bishop, with his younger colleagues Tommy, Tip and Dennis, who try unsuccessfully to pin Clay's killing on White. Jimmy Jump and other gang members are later arrested for the murder of the Colombians, though they are released after representation from Jennifer. White talks to Chinese gang leader Larry Wong, with whom he wants to make a drugs deal in order to raise money for the hospital; when Wong refuses, he is killed in a raid on his Chinatown hangout.

After making a donation to the hospital, White is fêted by the media, and Tip, Tommy and Dennis decide they will have to work outside the law to get him. Using White's confidant Joey Dalesio as a front, and making it look like the work of a rival gang, the young policemen storm White's warehouse hang-out, and in the ensuing battle Tip, Tommy, Jimmy Jump and the female bodyguards are killed. Aware of the police involvement, White orders Dalesio's execution and then takes care of Dennis at the funeral of Tip and Tommy. Visiting Bishop at his

home for a 'chat', White leaves him handcuffed to a chair. But Bishop escapes and pursues White into the night. A shoot-out in the subway leaves Bishop dead and White mortally wounded as he makes his escape by cab.

Abel Ferrara's flashy story of an underworld king who loses his crown is executed with the mix of splatter and gallows humour that Ferrara has made his own, but without the roots in a personal or ethnic history which characterise Scorsese's goodfellas or Coppola's godfathers. Although we learn that he is from the South Bronx, Frank White is like the outsider riding into town, a self-made 'businessman' who lords it over an adopted family of Hispanics and blacks.

The New York that White returns to in his stretch limo is a divided city that shimmers with the decadence and decay of a Shanghai. Indeed, it is a city where the great rain has already started to fall (and, not one for subtlety, Ferrara drives the point home when White dies in the back of a yellow cab complete with crucifix dangling from the rear-view mirror). Fanfared by Vivaldi, White resumes his position in his makeshift palace at the Plaza with all the aplomb of an exiled monarch, with fresh-cut lillies, cut-glass flutes of champagne, and leather-clad, gun-toting women bodyguards.

This cavalier life style is pitted against the small-mindedness and envy of the police. In his final confrontation with the old-style policeman Bishop, White claims that although his hands are dirty his soul is pure: he killed Larry Wong only when the latter refused to make a deal, even after being given a personal tour of the children's hospital White was trying to save. Although Christopher Walken lends the role a certain sleazy charm, when the King finally takes the Bishop, the result is merely a stalemate.

**Lizzie Francke**



Adopted family



# Navy Seals

**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
Rank  
**Production Company**  
Orion  
**Producers**  
Brenda Feigen  
Bernard Williams  
**Production**  
**Co-ordinators**  
Michelle Wright  
2nd Unit:  
W.M.A. Johnson  
**Production Managers**  
David C. Anderson  
Spain:  
Vincente Escrava  
**Unit Managers**  
Spain:  
Angelica De Leon  
Production:  
David C. Anderson  
**Underwater Unit**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Walter Clayton  
**Location Managers**  
Charlie Baxter  
Spain:  
Manuel Muñoz Pombo  
Beatriz Becerra  
**Post-production**  
**Supervisor**  
Paul A. Levin  
**2nd Unit Directors**  
Bud Davis  
Bob Carmichael  
**Casting**  
Sally Dennison  
Julie Selzer  
Associate:  
Patrick Rush  
NY:  
Brian Chavanne  
Julie Mossberg  
London:  
Rose Tobias-Shaw  
Location/Extras:  
Francisco Garcia  
Sanchez  
Voice:  
Barbara Harris  
**Assistant Directors**  
José Kuki Lopez Rodero  
Frank Capra III  
Sebastian Ballhaus  
Spain:  
Miguel Lima Martinez  
Alexandra Palau  
2nd Unit:  
Alejandro Calvo-Sotelo  
**Screenplay**  
Chuck Pfarrer  
Gary Goldman  
**Director of**  
**Photography**  
John A. Alonzo  
**Colour**  
Technicolor  
Prints by DeLuxe  
**2nd Unit Photography**  
Bob Carmichael  
Mike Ferris  
**Aerial Photography**  
Frank Holgate  
**Camera Operators**  
Mike Ferris  
Model Unit:  
Peter Hammond  
Aerial:  
Paul Ryan  
Skydiving:  
Norman Kent  
Tom Sanders  
Underwater:  
Peter Romano  
**Video**  
Co-ordinator:  
Elizabeth Radley  
Playback Operator:  
Ira Curtis-Coleman  
**Editor**  
Don Zimmerman  
**Production Designers**  
Guy J. Comtois  
Veronica Hadfield  
**Art Director**  
Spain:  
Fernando Gonzalez  
**Set Decorators**  
Malcolm Stone  
Debra Schutt  
**Conceptual Artist**  
Tom Southwell  
**Draughtswoman**  
Beatriz Gonzalez Viada  
**Scenic Artist**  
Jackie Stears  
**Special Effects**  
**Supervisor**  
John Stears

**Special Effects**  
Senior Technicians:  
Chuck Stewart  
Brian Warner  
Yves De Bono  
Roger Nichol  
Garth Inns  
Jonathon Angell  
Technicians:  
Bill Harrison  
Ricky Helmer  
Jeffrey Knott  
Geoffrey Gilks  
Casey Cavanaugh  
**Models**  
Antonio Balandin  
Antonio Bueno  
José Vargas Espericueta  
**Music/Music Director**  
Sylvester Levay  
**Music Performed by**  
Munich Philharmonic  
Orchestra  
**Music Supervisor**  
Michael Dilbeck  
**Supervising Music**  
**Editor**  
Jim Henrickson  
**Music Editor**  
Steve Livingston  
**Songs**  
"Tempt Me (If You Want To)" by Jude Cole, Bill Wray, Lisa Hartman, performed by Lisa Hartman; "Wounded Warrior" by Vini Ponci, performed by Vicki Thomas; "The Boys Are Back in Town" by Phil Lynott, performed by Bon Jovi; "Strike Like Lightning", "Shadows" by Giorgio Moroder, Tom Whitlock, Larry Lee, Steve Bates, performed by Mr Big; "Hangin' on My Hip" by Bruce Turgon, Lou Gramm, performed by Lou Gramm; "The Dragon" by Lawrence Gowan, Eddie Schwartz, performed by Jim Cuddy, Greg Keelor, performed by Blue Rodeo; "I Don't Want to Say Goodnight" by Cliff Magness, Glen Ballard, Jay Graydon, performed by Planet 3; "Hardline" by Tom Kimmel, Dennis Morgan, performed by Ritchie Havens  
**Costume**  
Design:  
Brad Loman  
Supervisor:  
Sally D. Smith  
**Costumers**  
Mitchell Kenney  
Elizabeth C. Grudzinski  
**Make-up Artists**  
Lynne Eagan  
Joanne Whalley-Kilmer:  
Pat Hay  
2nd Unit:  
Janeen Davis-Schreyer  
**Special Make-up**  
Matthew Mungle  
**Supervising Sound**  
**Editor**  
Martin Maryska  
**Dialogue Sound**  
**Editors**  
David Kulczycki  
Jane Carpenter  
Jerry Davis  
**ADR Supervisor**  
George Berndt  
**ADR Editors**  
Lauren Palmer  
Holly Huckins  
**Foley Editors**  
Hamilton Sterling  
Gordon Davidson  
Nancy Richardson  
Richard Burton  
**Sound Recordist**  
Ed White  
Mark "Frito" Lang  
Dolby stereo  
**Sound Re-recordists**  
Michael Minkler  
Gregg Landaker  
**Sound Effects Editors**  
John Larson  
Rodger Pardee  
Jay Wilkinson

Peter Sullivan  
John Bob Newlan  
**Technical Advisers**  
Chuck Pfarrer  
Christopher Lindsay  
Steve Fraser  
Duncan Smith  
Tom Harbrecht  
Mark Steffanich  
Dan Jessee  
Keith Woulard  
Frank Leslie  
**Naval Consultant**  
Dale K. Patterson  
**Naval Co-ordinator**  
Commander Pedro Duran  
**Stunt Co-ordinators**  
Bud Davis  
Spain:  
Miguel Pedregosa  
**Stunts**  
Dennis Scott  
Jack Gill  
**Stunt Double**  
Charlie Sheen:  
Eddie Braun  
**Pilots**  
Skip Evans  
Helicopter:  
Craig Hosking  
Jet:  
Jeff Senour  
**Cast**  
**Charlie Sheen**  
Lieutenant Dale Hawkins  
**Michael Biehn**  
Lieutenant Commander James Curran  
**Joanne Whalley-Kilmer**  
Claire Verens  
**Rick Rossovich**  
Leary  
**Cyril O'Reilly**  
Rexer  
**Bill Paxton**  
Dane  
**Dennis Haysbert**  
Paul Sanchez  
Ramos  
**Nicholas Kadi**  
Ben Shaheed  
**Ron Joseph**  
Captain Dunne  
**S. Epatha Merkerson**  
Jolena  
**Greg McKinney**  
US Helicopter Pilot  
**Rob Moran**  
US Helicopter Co-pilot  
**Richard Venture**  
Admiral Colker  
**Mark Carlton**  
Jim Elmore  
**Ira Wheeler**  
Warren Stinson  
**Ron Faber**  
General Mateen  
**Bill Cort**  
Elliott West  
**Randy Hall**  
Navy Seal No.8  
**Duncan Smith**  
EOD Officer  
**William Knight**  
Submarine Captain  
**Nehme Fadlallah**  
Ali  
**Marc Zuber**  
Villa Hostage  
**Vic Tablian**  
Terrorist  
**Adam Hussein**  
"Latanya" Captain  
**George Jackos**  
Druze Fighter  
**Ian Tyler**  
Shepherd  
**Michael Alphonse**  
**Ezra Abraham**  
Israeli Intelligence  
**John Pruitt**  
Local TV Announcer  
**Tom Sean Foley**  
Crewman C130  
**William Roberts**  
**Michael Fitzpatrick**  
Aircraft Carrier Officers  
**Cathryn De Prume**  
Bartender  
**Titus Welliver**  
Redneck in Bar  
**10,209 feet**  
**114 minutes**

## USA 1990

**Director: Lewis Teague**

An American naval helicopter is shot down by an Arab gunboat, and its crew taken prisoner and tortured. The navy SEALs team led by James Curran and Lieutenant Dale Hawkins abandon the wedding of their colleague, Billy Graham, and head for a Mediterranean seaport. From there, they attack the terrorists' headquarters, saving two of the US prisoners but leaving behind a supposed Egyptian prisoner and a consignment of Stinger missiles. Back in Washington, Curran is shown a TV interview with Ben Shaheed, leader of Al Shuhada, a terrorist splinter group – and in fact the Egyptian 'prisoner' they spared.

Naval intelligence leads Curran and his team to the merchant ship "Latanya", but this proves a dead end. Determined to destroy the Stinger missiles, Curran contacts the TV journalist who interviewed Shaheed, the half-Lebanese Claire Verens. Despite a mutual physical attraction, Verens at first refuses to reveal her sources; but when a Stinger missile destroys a plane with a seven-man Algerian peace commission on board, she identifies her informer. A plan to kidnap the latter goes well, until Hawkins acts impulsively, endangers the team, and Graham is killed. The tensions between Curran and Hawkins (complicated by the latter's attraction to Claire) come to a violent head, but are partly defused when Hawkins accepts responsibility for Graham's death.

The team parachutes into the sea off Beirut, and a young boy, Ali, guides them to the bombed-out house where the missiles are hidden. Curran saves the wounded Hawkins' life as the team blow up the house and flee across the war-torn city. The captain of the submarine with which they must rendezvous before dawn prepares to leave. Pursued by Shaheed and his men, what remains of the team (Dane and Rexer have

been killed) make it to the beach. After a bloody gun battle, Shaheed attempts to escape by boat but is killed by Hawkins. As the team tread water, the submarine surfaces beside them.

Where filming 'topical' political conflicts is concerned, American studios have never learned their lesson. The desire to cash in on successive terrorist outrages is seldom politically risky, since – as in this case – the perpetrators are always a fanatical splinter group dedicated to senseless violence rather than any specific political aims. Success at the box office, however, is hostage to more fickle elements, such as the ever-changing fashion in real-life political villains. Where, after all, is the audience for *Navy Seals*, a film about American hostages in Lebanon, at a time when the headlines are dominated by Operation Desert Storm? Or in the case of the film's belated British release, by its tragic aftermath, the plight of the Kurdish refugees?

To some extent, *Navy Seals* avoids these problems by being so devoid of political content, and so full of gung-ho clichés, that it has some of the atavistic appeal of a hackneyed World War II movie. Michael Biehn, a dangerously psychotic SEALs officer in James Cameron's *The Abyss*, is here the diligent team commander; the psycho role this time goes to Charlie Sheen, while the terrorist fanatics are, to a man, "one sandwich short of a picnic". Director Lewis Teague is too busy orchestrating the large-scale action sequences to make anything of the sketchy characters or episodic plot. The false alarm on board the merchant ship "Latanya", for instance, serves only to demonstrate the skills of the stuntmen and the generosity of the Spanish Navy, which provided the battleships, submarines and helicopters used to no great effect throughout.

**Nigel Floyd**



**Role reversal: Charlie Sheen, Michael Biehn**



# Ni ju-seiki Shonen Dokuhon (Circus Boys)



You only live once... Moe Kamura, Hiroshi Mikami

## Distributor

ICA Projects

## Production Companies

Eizo Tanteisha

Productions/

CBS Sony Group

## Executive Producers

Ryuzo Shirakawa

Kaizo Hayashi

## Producers

Mituhisa Hida

Yoichi Sakurai

## Production Manager

Yasutada Uemura

## Assistant Director

Tempei Matsuda

## Screenplay

Kaizo Hayashi

## Director of Photography

Yuichi Nagata

## Lighting

Tatsuya Nagata

## Opticals

Michihisa Miyashige

## Visual Effects

Minoru Nakano

## Lighting

Tatsuya Nagata

## Editor

Osamu Tanaka

## Art Directors

Takeo Kimura

Hidemitsu Yamazaki

## Set Decorator

Toru Fujita

## Music

Hidehiko Urayama

Yoko Kumagai

## Music Producer

Haruhiko Yoshida

## Costume Design

Sachiko Ito

## Make-up

Eriko Tamashiro

## Special Make-up

Tomoo Haraguchi

## Titles

Agata Moriue

## Sound Recordist

Ichiro Kawashima

## Sound Effects

Harada Sound

## Subtitles

Donald Richie

Kazuko Shibata

## Cast

Hiroshi Mikami

Jinta

Moe Kamura

Omocha

Xia Jian

Wataru

Michiru Akiyoshi

Maria

Yuki Asayama

Sayoko

Sanshi Katsura

Samejima

Haruko Wanibuchi

Samejima's Wife

Yoshio Harada

Yoshimoto

Shiro Sano

Hiroshi

Yukio Yamato

Koji

Maki Ishikawa

Yoshiko

Akira Oizumi

Ring Master

Akaji Maro

Tattoo Master

Chuck

Masashi Okuda

Baiken Jukkanji

Clowns

Yoshio Yasuho

Trapeze Master

Tetsu Watanabe

Elephant Master

Motomi Makiguchi

Smith Shirai

Seigen Nakayama

Riki-san

Shumon Kawamura

Juggler

Takafumi Nobunaga

Jinta as a child

Taiki Ichiura

Tomoharu Masuda

Wataru as a child

Miki Shimomoto

Lani Aula

Maria as a child

## Yumeko Taki

Aya Matsushita

Sayoko as a child

Hairi Katagiri

Mihoko Ogawa

Nekohime

Midori Nagayo

Mami Arita

Women on Train

Ika-Hachiro

Mitsuhiro

Matsumoto

Hiroshi Tsujimoto

Nobuji Yamashita

Kazuo Iihama

Gang Members

Go Nagai

Shun Ueda

Police Officers

9,540 feet

106 minutes

## Subtitles

## Japan 1989

### Director: Kaizo Hayashi

Jinta and Wataru are 'circus boys', children abandoned to the care of circus folk, who adopt them into this larger and itinerant 'family' and train them to take part in their acts. As members of the Great Crescent Circus, the boys dream of one day becoming trapeze artists with their own act. Jinta secretly practises, hoping that his dedication will be taken for talent, and encourages his younger brother Wataru to do the same. The plan succeeds and the two boys are pronounced trainable.

One evening, two more children, Maria and Sayoko, are brought to the circus. When Jinta injures himself attempting to break Wataru's fall during practice, Maria takes his place in their embryonic act. As the years pass and the children grow to adolescence, Wataru and Maria become trapeze artists while Jinta, left with a limp, regretfully joins the clowns. Finally unable to bear or conceal his chagrin, he leaves the Great Crescent Circus and becomes an itinerant pedlar, duping the public with quack remedies and sham goods.

As time passes and the ringmaster dies, various circus members drift away. Before Koji leaves, he is given a message for Jinta - should he meet him - to say that he would always be welcome if he decided to return. Wataru recognises the need for a new act, and devises one using bicycles and the now aged elephant. Just before the performance is due to start, the keeper advises against letting the now virtually blind elephant perform. The show goes on, however, and when the elephant stampedes in terror, she is shot by the police. Subsequently, Wataru creates a wall-of-death ride with motorcycles.

Jinta reads of the elephant's death while carousing with geishas. Soon after, he is attacked by gangsters when he inadvertently trades on their patch. Once he has been initiated into the gang by their boss, Yoshimoto, he visits local underworld figure Samejima, and finds himself drawn to his concubine, Omocha. When Samejima discovers them together, they attempt to kill him and flee. As the gang close in to exact revenge, Omocha and Jinta catch sight of the tent of the Great Crescent Circus.

Kaizo Hayashi's original title for his film, *Boys' Own Book of the Twentieth Century*, suggests precisely the scope of its subject and its particular flavour. The film is an evocation of a particular twentieth-century sensibility, couched in and explored through a form at once deliberately naive and intentionally

nostalgic. It is nothing quite as specific as a history, although the passage of time is poignantly evoked - the children grow up; the circus master dies, remembering Jinta on his deathbed; the 'elephant' meets an unnatural end, all of which suggest, in their different and symbolic ways, the end of particular eras.

Historical events impinge only through their effects, for Hayashi is scrupulous about paring his film's world down to that of the Great Crescent Circus itself, forever encamped on the outskirts of a town which is barely glimpsed, whose existence is only inferred from the presence of the audience in the big top. On the road, those limits are defined by the circus' errant son Jinta, as he meanders through his particular floating world, "an acrobat juggling words" to dupe his public





en route to final redemption. Hayashi has invoked Fellini's practice in *La Strada* of taking a pre-existing genre and progressively bringing his own style and concerns to bear in such a way that the generic world of the circus film is gradually effaced. He has also made clear that he has no interest in the realities of circus life, only in the archetypal idea of the circus.

In particular, the opening scenes of the circus performance strongly convey the sense of a world of fairy-tale and illusion. Like Fellini, Hayashi deals with guilt and innocence and the tarnishing of ideals, setting the paths of the two circus boys at odds with each other. Jinta's cynicism (he practises to seem what he is not) is set against Wataru's transparency, in a world where the issue is not simply that of illusion versus reality,

but what kind of illusion and employed to what end. There are the shadows of Wataru's wooden acrobat puppets we see in close-up on the canvas of the tent, and there are the shadows of the real trapeze artists. There are the codes of the world of the circus, in which everyone is an artist and no distinction is made between members, and there are the codes of the gangsters, which Jinta must break if he is to rescue Omocha. The elephant seems in fact to be a mechanical one (though realistic), and it is this beast which Wataru, to keep up with changing times, has to replace with real machines (motorbikes).

One consequence of Hayashi's making his tale specifically 'boys own' is that female characters only exist in relation to the male characters and their particular fates.

Maria does not actually displace Jinta in the tightrope act he had long dreamt of setting up with Wataru, but when he injures himself she is there to take his place, and Jinta suffers pangs of exclusion. Omocha, initially shown as no more than a 'sexual plaything' (and indeed purchased for Samejima by his wife for just that purpose), becomes through Jinta's love the means by which he finds his way back to the circus. Here Hayashi deftly encapsulates the classic tradition of *l'amour fou* as the couple's flight embraces attempted murder and the possibility of mutual suicide.

Hayashi is an extraordinarily disciplined film-maker, and the fierce austerity of his black-and-white images gives his film a hard edge that prevents it from becoming merely fey or melancholy. There is the simple

#### Juggling words and worlds

clarity of the shots of the rejected Jinta doffing his clown's nose by the side of the stage, and the extraordinary naive directness of the scene of the elephant's death for which decades of Disney have left Western audiences largely unprepared.

It is difficult to think of contemporary points of comparison for Hayashi's film, which tends rather to recall *Les Enfants du Paradis*, although much steelier. It is difficult, also, to recall another film offering such a precise sense of the poetry of cinema this side of the early days of the French New Wave. The emergence of Hayashi points to exceptional developments in Japanese cinema.

**Verina Glaessner**



# Not Without My Daughter



Hostages: Alfred Molina, Sheila Rosenthal, Sally Field

## Certificate

12

**Distributor**  
UIP

**Production Company**  
Pathé Entertainment  
Inc

An Ufand production

## Producers

Harry J. Ufand

Mary Jane Ufand

**Associate Producer**

Anthony Wayne

**Production**

**Co-ordinators**

Edna Rosen

Atlanta:

Alison Deen

**Production**

**Managers**

Dov Maoz

Atlanta:

Tom Luse

**Unit Manager**

Avner Peled

**Location Managers**

Danny Ben-Menachem

Raz Haen

Atlanta:

Carri Gibbs

**Post-production**

**Co-ordinator**

Wendy Shorter

**Casting**

Mike Fenton

Judy Taylor

Joyce Gallie

Location:

Dalia Havers

Atlanta:

Shay Griffin

Extras:

Dee Voigt

**Assistant Directors**

Adi Shoval

Michal Engle

Yael Golan

Avichai Hening

Kisane Marks

Atlanta:

Dick Feury

Cathy Roszell

**Screenplay**

David Rintels

Based on the book by

Betty Mahmoody with

William Hoffer

**Director of**

**Photography**

Peter Hannan

In colour

**Camera Operator**

Bob Smith

**Editor**

Terry Rawlings

**Production Designer**

Anthony Pratt

**Art Directors**

Desmond Crowe

Avi Avivi

**Set Decorators**

Anat Avivi

Atlanta:

Joe Litsch

## Set Dressers

Shlomo Zafir

Daniel Magen

Itzhack Noriani

Iftach Nahoom

Oded Nehemiya

Eli Fishbaum

Amos Lavi

Ran Yaar

Nahva Killman

**Scenic Artist**

Mirta Reinerman

**Special Effects**

**Co-ordinator**

Pini Klavir

**Music**

Jerry Goldsmith

**Music Extract**

"Vissi d'arte" from

Tosca by Giacomo

Puccini, performed

by Zinka Milanov and

the Rome Orchestra

and Chorus,

conducted by

Erich Leinsdorf

**Music Performed by**

The National

Philharmonic

Orchestra

**Orchestrations**

Arthur Morton

**Music Supervisor**

Joachim H. Hansch

**Music Editor**

Kenneth Hall

**Song**

"Happy Birthday to

You" by Mildred Hill,

Patty Hill

**Costume Design**

Nic Ede

**Wardrobe**

Co-ordinator:

Rachel Orbach

Mistress:

Pam Eyal

Atlanta:

Susan Mickey

**Make-up**

Supervisor:

Lee Harman

Artist:

Zivit Yakir

Atlanta:

Judy Ponder

**Titles/Opticals**

GSE London

**Sound Editor**

Jim Shields

**Foley Editor**

Glen Freemantle

**Sound Recordist**

Eli Yarkoni

Dolby stereo

**Sound Re-recordists**

Supervisor:

Bill Rowe

Ray Merrin

John Falcini

Atlanta:

Jim Hawkins

**Production**

**Assistants**

Set:

Sean Swint

Mike McMahan

Office:

Stuart Dodge

## Cast

**Sally Field**

Betty Mahmoody

**Alfred Molina**

Moody

**Sheila Rosenthal**

Mahtob

**Roshan Seth**

Houssein

**Sarah Badel**

Nicole

**Mony Rey**

Ameb Bozorg

**Georges Corraface**

Mohsen

**Mary Nell**

**Santacroce**

Grandma

**Ed Grady**

Grandpa

**Marc Gowan**

**Bruce Evers**

Doctors

**Jonathan Cherchi**

Mammal

**Soudabeh**

**Farokhnia**

Nasserine

**Michael Morim**

Zia

**Gili Ben-Ozilio**

Fereshte

**Racheli Chaimian**

Zoreh

**Yossi Tabib**

Reza

**Amir Shmuel**

Baba Hajji

**Yacov Banai**

Aga Hakim

**Defna Armoni**

Koran Teacher

**Judith Robinson**

Ellen

**Avraham Morr**

Hormoz

**Sasson Gabai**

Hamid

**Ahuva Keren**

Miss Nassimi

**Farzaneh Taidi**

Khanun Shaheen

**Yerusha Tirosh**

Mahtob's Teacher

**Yossi Shiloach**

Mohsen's Companion

**Shaul Mizrahi**

Iranian Soldier

**10,404 feet**

**116 minutes**

## USA 1990

**Director: Brian Gilbert**

Betty Mahmoody reluctantly agrees to accompany her doctor husband, Moody, and their daughter Mahtob on a short visit to her husband's family in Iran, in the wake of the revolution and the rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini. On arrival, Betty is overwhelmed by the intensity of their welcome from Moody's large and volatile family, and they are both surprised by their fundamentalist fervour, by the signs of religious extremism and the atmosphere of violence in the city. Betty is forced to wear traditional dress and veil even indoors.

Confessing that he has been fired by the hospital for which he worked in Michigan, Moody proposes that they live in Iran. Newly empowered by his revived faith in Islam, he overrides Betty's objections and she and Mahtob become virtual prisoners. From her mother in America (to whom she manages to get word), Betty learns of the American Interests section in the Swiss embassy. She is informed of the desperate nature of her legal situation under Iranian law, but when it is suggested that she could be smuggled out alone, she refuses to leave Mahtob.

On her return, she is severely beaten by Moody and further isolated; a move to his sister Nasserine's house does not help. When she meets a fellow American, Nicole, at Koran class, Betty attempts to pass a letter through her to the embassy, but Nicole is caught by her own husband and assaulted. While out shopping, Betty contrives to 'lose' Nasserine, and Houssein, who sells shirts, allows her to use his phone. Overhearing the conversation, he senses her plight and reveals that he and his sister Nassimi frequently help people in situations like hers.

They plan an escape route while Betty, who learns that her father is on the point of death, is given permission by Moody to visit him - alone. Betty sneaks out of the house with Mahtob while the horrified family watches the progress of the war with Iraq on television. Houssein stalls Moody by calling him at his clinic, and suggests an escape route over the mountains. Betty and Mahtob are led out of Iran by groups of armed insurgents; finally deposited in a deserted mountain village, they sight an American flag...

Not Without My Daughter fits with eerie precision into the cycle of paranoid and xenophobic Hollywood films familiar from the Cold War era, and exemplified by such titles as *I Married a Communist*. "I thought of him as an American", protests Betty of her husband at one

point. Just how dangerous and unfounded this assumption turns out to be is the main burden of the film. The narrative may raise the issue of a woman's right to self-determination within marriage (and her right to at least an equal say over her children's destiny), based as it is on the true story of Betty Mahmoody and her struggle to get her daughter out of Iran against her husband's wishes. But this is held hostage to a larger story: that of America's reaction to acts of self-determination on the part of oil-rich, previously client states in the Middle East.

"They're pretty strict on the dress code here!" Alfred Molina as husband Moody remarks. This is something of an under-statement: two black-veiled, gun-toting figures have just swooped from a jeep and gesticulated wildly at Betty. Indeed it is all downhill from the moment the couple arrive in Iran. Everything is alien (an effect exaggerated by letting exchanges in Farsi go largely untranslated), hysterical, 'primitive' (both Betty and Moody have recourse to this epithet) and excessive, from the crowd of whooping, weeping women at the airport to the still-twitching body of the beast slaughtered in welcome on the doorstep of the family home.

To be fair, David Rintels' script does attempt a more measured approach. Rintels has tended to specialise in political dramas like *Washington: Behind Closed Doors* and *Sakharov*, and takes some pains to provide authentic journalistic detail. One character attempts to explain the importance of the revolution for Iranians as a means of achieving nationhood through religion, another the guilt felt by émigrés at their absence during the revolution. Elsewhere, mention is made of possible prejudice experienced by Moody in the US. But such explanations go for very little given the hysterical direction of National Film School graduate Brian Gilbert.

That all the hysteria is not simply a generalised expression of the protagonist's terror at the unfamiliar, and that Iran is not just standing in for any old foreign hell-hole, is made clear by the precision with which the film's fundamental ideological premise is spelt out. Betty finds salvation in the form of a kindly shirt seller who, in Roshan Seth's gentlemanly performance, with its dapper echoes of *Casablanca*, is at all times rather more than he seems. He quite literally opens the door for Betty to an explicitly Persian garden, while discoursing on "another Iran... I try to remember its gardens". All without, as we have seen, is, by definition, wilderness, and only the American flag, fluttering in a deserted border village, offers any hope of a safe haven.

**Verina Glaessner**



**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
Palace Pictures  
**Production Company**  
Bialystock & Bloom Ltd  
In association with  
Téléfilm Canada,  
Ontario Film  
Development  
Corporation, British  
Satellite Broadcasting,  
British Screen,  
Skyhost Ltd  
**Executive Producer**  
Rafe Engle  
**Producer**  
Michael Burns  
**Associate Producers**  
Harry Dittson  
Barbara Kelly  
**Production**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Janet Damp  
**Production Manager**  
Barbara Kelly  
**Location Manager**  
Christopher Danton  
**Location Consultant**  
Thom Sokoloski  
**Post-production**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Catherine Hunt  
**Casting**  
Gail Carr  
Levy Comerford  
**Extras:**  
Rose Lewis Casting  
**Assistant Directors**  
Elizabeth Scherberger  
Brian Dennis  
Michael Johnson  
Joanne Tickle  
**Screenplay**  
Eugene Lipinski  
Paul Quarrington  
**Story**  
Eugene Lipinski  
**Director of Photography**  
Alain Dostie  
**In colour**  
**Camera Operators**  
Angelo Colaveccia  
Dan Henshaw  
**Editor**  
Ronald Sanders  
**Production Designer**  
Anne Pritchard  
**Opera Design**  
**Consultant**  
Michael Levine  
**Set Decorator**  
Gordon Sim  
**Set Dresser**  
Richard Ferbrache  
**Music**  
Richard Gregoire  
**Music Extracts**  
*Romeo and Juliet* by  
Sergei Prokofiev;  
*Norma* by Vincenzo  
Bellini; *La Traviata*,  
*Requiem*, *Il Trovatore*,  
*Aida* by Giuseppe  
Verdi; 8th & 9th  
Symphonies by Gustav  
Mahler; *Tosca*, *Manon*  
*Lescaut* by Giacomo  
Puccini; *Salomé* by  
Richard Strauss;  
"Symphonie  
Fantastique" by Louis  
Hector Berlioz  
**Music Consultant**  
Steven Thomas  
**Music Editor**  
Michael Rea  
**Costume Design**  
Margaret M. Mohr



**Divas: Michael Riley, Robbie Coltrane**

**Wardrobe**  
Gail Filman  
**Make-up**  
Irene Kent  
**Titles/Opticals**  
Film Effects, Toronto  
**Sound Editors**  
David Evans  
Wayne Griffin  
Tony Currie  
**Sound Recordists**  
Doug Ganton  
**Music:**  
Paul Page  
**ADR and Foley**  
**Recordist**  
Jack Heeren  
**Sound Mixer**  
Doug Ganton  
**Sound Re-**  
**Recordists**  
David Appleby  
Don White  
**Foley Artist**  
Andy Malcolm  
**Hockey Co-ordinator**  
Jim Comerford  
**Production**  
**Assistant**  
Rob Fowler

**Cast**  
**Robbie Coltrane**  
Alonzo Turner  
**Michael Riley**  
Renzo Parachi  
**Deborah Duchene**  
Denise  
**Eugene Lipinski**  
Karl Hoblich,  
"Hopeless"  
**Jack Nichols**  
Duane Bickle  
**Elizabeth Harpur**  
Gloria  
**Patricia Gage**  
Mrs Hathaway  
**Kenneth Welsh**  
Charlie Glesby  
**Kristina Nicoll**  
Tiffany  
**Peter Millard**  
Bunden  
**Bryan Foster**  
Gig Manyon  
**Andrew Miller**  
Pizza Guy  
**Warren Van Evera**  
Old Man  
**Douglas C. Frye**  
Boy in Cab  
**Graham Harley**  
Middle-aged Man  
**Ellen Ray Hennessey**  
Clairvoyant  
**Gene DiNovi**  
Priest  
**Gino Marrocco**  
Uncle Thomas  
**Roc Lafortune**  
St John's Ambulance  
Man  
**Harry Dittson**  
Man in Stand  
**Paul Rainville**  
Snack-bar Customer  
**Rina Polley**  
Restaurant Woman

**Eric Keenleyside**  
Restaurant Man  
**Gina Vasic**  
1st Woman  
**Betty Orsatti**  
2nd Woman  
**Tom Melissis**  
Eastern Clay Player  
**Vivian Reis**  
Mrs Parachi  
**Paul Smart**  
Practical Hockey Ref  
**Rummy Bishop**  
Willy Dunn  
**Paul Jolicoeur**  
Eddie Eggars  
**Pete Windrum**  
**Tom Anderson**  
**Peter Faussett**  
**Jay Bowen**  
**Denis Kane**  
**Joe Stark**  
**Herb Reading**  
**Emil Glassbourg**  
Tate Titans  
**Mike Anderson**  
**Jeff Peer**  
**Al Campbell**  
**Pierre Tetreau**  
**Wally Wallchuck**  
**Billy Martindale**  
**Bob Wilson**  
**Les Mann**  
**Danny Biscaro**  
**Steve Thomas**  
Eastern Clay  
**Peter Chinn**  
**Sean Hewitt**  
**Dianne**  
**Heatherington**  
**Harry Dittson**  
La Traviata Waiters

**9,484 feet**  
**105 minutes**

## Canada 1990

**Director: Yves Simoneau**

The deeply withdrawn Renzo Parachi (his father is long dead, his mother recently so, perhaps by suicide) works in the Tate Brewery by day and drives a cab by night. Renzo's only recreation is keeping goal for the brewery's ice-hockey team, the Tate Titans, who have never beaten arch rivals Eastern Electric. Despite his innocuous nature, Renzo excites the exasperation of his boss and coach Charlie Glesby, because of his dull life style; the jealousy of workmate Karl Hoblich (known as "Hopeless") because of his position at the brewery; and the covert affection of the ice-rink snack-bar girl, Denise.

One night in his cab, Renzo picks up up Alonzo Turner, a roguish entrepreneur-cum-cook, and offers him a bed for the night. They discover a common love of opera, and when Alonzo becomes a regular boarder, occupying Renzo's mother's old bedroom, they discuss their respective dreams: Renzo is saving to build a house on a plot of land he owns, while Alonzo wants to open an Italian restaurant with an operatic theme. While Renzo is out on his first date with Denise, Alonzo discovers a small fortune stashed by Renzo's mother in the sleeves of her opera records. Renzo's unexpected return forces Alonzo to reveal his discovery, and he urges Renzo to invest in the 'La Traviata' restaurant. An accident at work engineered by Hoblich to discredit Renzo seriously injures Charlie, and the disenchanted Renzo decides to leave and throw in his lot with Alonzo.

Following a romantic night in Renzo's room, Denise discovers a photograph of her new boyfriend in drag; unaware that it is part of Alonzo's planned "grand operatic floorshow", she leaves in disgust. Alonzo confesses to Renzo that he has been recognised by a local newspaper critic, Gig Manyon, as the ex-owner of a Florida seafood restaurant notorious for poisoning its customers. Renzo is undeterred, and the opening night of La Traviata arrives, coinciding with a crucial ice-hockey game against Eastern Electric, which the Tate Titans win. After the game, the team arrives at La Traviata to witness Renzo in drag singing with Alonzo to a packed house. At first bemused, the team are won over by the music, especially Hoblich, who assaults a noisy patron; a brawl ensues and Alonzo flees. The next morning, Denise and Renzo (now reunited) read a rave review of La Traviata by Gig Manyon.

Yves Simoneau's quirky film is a small triumph which heartily defies categorisation. Writer Eugene Lipinski describes his semi-

autobiographical tale as an attempt to demonstrate that "small people in small towns can have as large emotions and as rich a life as those who live in London or New York". This dichotomy between the placid surface and extravagant undercurrents of small-town life is beautifully dramatised. From the desperate longing of Charlie Glesby for his ice-hockey team to defeat Eastern Electric *once* before he dies, to the burning passion of Denise for Renzo and the equally charged hatred of Hoblich, every human emotion is at once mundane and vibrant, insignificant and yet earth-shattering.

Taking the operatic form as his blueprint, Simoneau crafts a film whose logic is musical, and which appeals on an emotional and instinctive rather than rational level. The majestic sweep of the opening montage, wherein Renzo's mother's death is intercut with scenes of her son alone on the ice rink, gives way to a grand ballet of machinery in the Tate Brewery, with bottles pouring off the production line to the strains of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Simoneau intersperses his narrative with balletic, slow-motion footage of rumbustious ice-hockey matches, the clumsy, crashing violence of the game transformed by the camera and revealed as an intricately choreographed mosaic of motion.

In life as in the game, Renzo is the consummate goal-keeper, waging a war of self-protection against the world, while simultaneously marshalling his own extraordinary (and as yet unleashed) powers. Rising to the peculiar challenges of their respective roles, Robbie Coltrane and newcomer Michael Riley are a marvellous double act. Introduced as a rather gangster-ish figure, but soon revealed to be simply fleeing from one more disastrous project, Alonzo becomes, despite himself, the instrument of destiny and fate. He pushes the seemingly catatonic Renzo into realising his own possibilities, in the process perhaps fulfilling his mother's ambitions.

A large and strangely maternal figure, Coltrane is ideally cast as Alonzo, stepping unwittingly into old Mrs Parachi's shoes, cooking Renzo's meals, waiting up for him at night, and urging him to break out of his 'dull' routine. It is surely no coincidence that it is Alonzo rather than Renzo who discovers Mrs Parachi's hidden stash of money, and who subsequently (if reluctantly) passes it on to her beleaguered son, insisting that he use it 'wisely'. Hindered only by its occasionally flagging pace, *Perfectly Normal* is an exotic five-course meal set to music. And as with the best opera, the laughs are frequent and full-bodied. **Mark Kermode**



# Reise der Hoffnung (Journey of Hope)



Foolish man (Necmettin Çobanoğlu)...

## Certificate

PG

## Distributor

Mainline

## Production Company

Catpics

In association with

Condor Productions

With financial

assistance from

SRG, RTSI, Film Four

International

## Producers

Alfi Sinniger

Peter Fueter

## Production Supervisors

Raimondo Esposito

SRG:

Sonja Gutmann

Film Four

International:

David Rose

## Production Managers

Turkey:

Turgay Aksoy

Italy:

Stefano Alleva

Switzerland:

Peter Spoerri

## Unit Managers

Turkey:

Günay Güner

Ibrahim Gündüz

Switzerland:

Mike Schleinger

## Post-production Co-ordinator

Rüdiger Findeisen

## Assistant Directors

Konstantin Schmidt

Italy:

Nello Correale

Switzerland:

Martin Steiner

## Screenplay

Xavier Koller

Feride Çiçekoğlu

## Screenplay Collaborator

Heike Hubert

## Director of Photography

Elemer Ragalyi

In colour

## 2nd Camera Operator

Pio Corradi

## Editor

Galip Iyitanir

## Art Directors

Italy:

Luigi Pelizzo

Switzerland:

Kathrin Brunner

## Special Effects

Otto Franke

Helmut Klee

## Music Producer

Manfred Eicher

## Costume Design

Italy:

Maria Grazia

Colombini

Turkey:

Feride Çiçekoğlu

## Wardrobe

Turkey:

Deniz Bilges

Italy:

Maria Antonella

Cannarozzi

## Sound Editor

Milan Bor

## Sound Recordists

Pavol Jasovsky

Remo Belli

Dialogue:

Robert Jansa

## Sound Re-recorder

Milan Bor

## Sound Effects

Bernd Schmidl

Andreas Schneider

## Consultant

Feride Çiçekoğlu

## Production Assistant

Sabina Wolfer

## Dog Trainer

Edouard Cavazzi

## Cast

Necmettin

Çobanoğlu

Haydar

Nur Srer

Meryem

Emin Sivas

Mehmet Ali

Erdoğan Akbas

Adana

Yaman Okay

Türkmen

Yasar Gner

Haci Baba

Hseyin Mete

Selçuk

Yaman Tarcan

Ilyas

Selahattin Firat

Grandfather

Meryem Çaki

Grandmother

Mustafa

Mehmet

Fatma

Sükran

Zeynep

Elif

Children

Mayor Abbas Manis

Villager

Yasar Kutbay

Yasar

Kutay Köktürk

Seref

Mehmet Sukan

Musician at Semah

Ali Demirbas

Ekrem Kavur

Hasan Dündar

Guldüz

## Sevim Metin

Ayşe Gümüş

Saadet Türköz

Mercan Kavur

Semiha Dicleli

Zeynep

Erdal Merdan

Aldemir

Ihsan Karasubasi

Orhan

Sebastiano Filocamo

Aldo

Francesco Migliacchi

Konstantin Schmidt

Mechanics

Selahattin Kardağ

Ben Mohammed

Dietmar Schönherr

Massimo

Mathias Gnädinger

Ramser

Fritz Denoth

Grazer

Theo Marti

Padrutt

Herbert Leiser

Schweizer

Andrea Zogg

Christen

Hansjörg Schneider

Tännler

Nicolay Mylanek

Hotel Clerk

Liliana Heimberg

Doctor Zita Roth

Jürgen Czesla

Car Driver

Joseph Scheidegger

Doctor

Albert Freuler

State Attorney

Teco Celio

Custom Officer

René Peier

Truck Driver

Mastrocinque

Photographer

9,943 feet

110 minutes

## Subtitles

## Switzerland 1990

### Director: Xavier Koller

● A small village in Southern Turkey. Haydar receives a postcard from a cousin who recently emigrated to Switzerland. Although he is not yet working, his optimism (Switzerland is paradise, he says) inspires Haydar to follow the same route. He sells his flock and his land to buy tickets and false transit documents, then sets off with his wife, Meryem, and their seven-year-old son, Mehmet Ali (their six other children are dispersed amongst relatives in the village). Because Mehmet Ali has no passport, the family stowaway on a freighter from Istanbul to Naples. There, instead of making his connection with the refugee traffickers, Haydar persuades a Swiss truck driver, Ramser, to give them a lift.

They reach the Swiss border only to be sent back to Milan for trying to enter the country illegally. Reverting to the original plan, they meet up with other refugees, and Haydar gives all his money to the unscrupulous Swiss who run the network, even selling his wife's jewellery to pay their passage. Together with another dozen refugees, the family are driven up into the mountains. Alarmed by the dangerous weather conditions, the network's alpine guide refuses to take the group. He is badly beaten for his trouble, and the refugees are ordered to make their own way over the summit. Once they are safely in Switzerland, they can claim political immunity.

The trek takes them well above the snow-line, and they are still climbing as night falls and the temperature drops below freezing. Eventually they come across a border post, but a guard dog gives them away, and the group splits up in panic. Meryem and most of the women finally make it across and surrender to the authorities at the nearest town, but Haydar and Mehmet Ali wander through the snow lost and alone. Appalled at the conditions, Swiss patrols try to save the remaining stragglers, but Haydar and his exhausted son cannot reach them. The next morning, Mehmet Ali is dead. The Swiss take Haydar into custody on a legal technicality. Ramser, the truck driver, visits him, but Haydar is inconsolable.

● Winner of this year's Best Foreign Film Oscar (Xavier Koller's *Black Tanner*, 1986, was also Oscar-nominated), *Journey of Hope* is a straightforward appeal to common humanity, the case study of a refugee family's trek from poverty in Turkey to a putative better world in Switzerland. Haydar's life in a remote Turkish village is initially



pictured in such idyllic terms that it's clear he should not leave it. Shafts of sunlight filter through the trees as his venerable father warns him, "Working in a factory will make you old before your time... I see it on their faces when they come back". "But they come back rich", counters Haydar.

In part, this is the tragedy of a foolish man. When he has traded his livestock for currency and passage, Haydar returns to the village beneath a rainbow, but thunder rumbles ominously in the distance. The second act takes Haydar, his wife and son, up to the Italian/Swiss border. From the network's point of view, Haydar is a troublesome refugee. He brings along his young son without prior notice and without any relevant documentation, and he naively tries to go it alone once he has safely arrived in Italy. But Haydar's simple optimism and





... sacrificial lamb (Emin Sivas)

unreserved love for his family win us over, and Koller finds ample time to indulge Emin Sivas' charming antics as the seven-year-old Mehmet Ali.

There is only the merest gesture towards an objective, political dimension. A brief exchange between a woman doctor and one of the (male) immigration authorities, debating whether these are patients first – human beings in need of care – or illegal immigrants – cases to be processed. There is no ambiguity in Koller's position, but that is no surprise. The question he asks himself is too easy, and the refugee traffickers are too clearly scapegoats. Thus racism is only a peripheral concern; institutional racism is just an after-thought.

One astonishing image belies this negligence. Together with a small group of refugees, Meryem, Haydar's wife, stumbles down from the mountain into Switzerland. Their

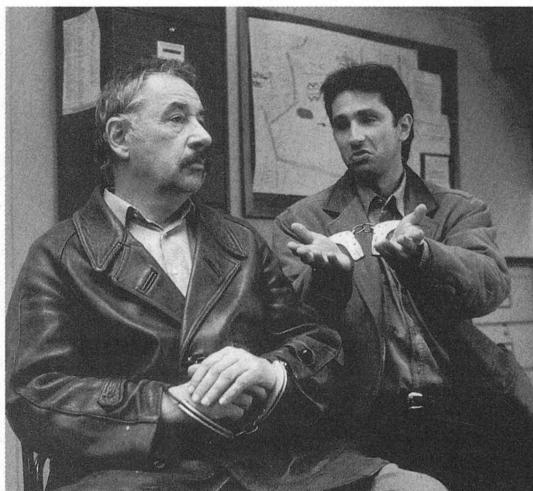
#### Borders of glass

first encounter with civilisation is a glass-walled swimming-pool, a bizarre spectacle in the midst of the night and snow, as the women press against the panes, clamouring for entry and political immunity. Furthermore, having supplied a sacrificial lamb – the boy, Mehmet Ali – Koller *does* prick our conscience. Before he is deported, Haydar is visited in prison by Ramser, who asks if he can help with the funeral expenses. The model Swiss citizen, his benevolent concern is clearly inadequate in the face of Haydar's inconsolable distress. "I would have liked to become your friend", the Turk tells him. It is not until much later that it occurs to us to ask if even this conclusion, hopeless as it seems, is not too generous. Would Ramser have shown up at all?

**Tom Charity**



# Ripoux contre ripoux (Le Cop 2)



Innocents with dirty hands...

**Certificate**  
12

**Distributor**  
Gala

**Production Companies**  
Films 7/Orly  
Films/Sedif/TF1 Films  
Production

**Producer**  
Pierre Gauchet

**Production**  
Evelyn Dubouché

**Co-ordinators**  
Mercedes Garcia

**Production Manager**  
Pierre Gauchet

**Casting**  
Mamade

**Extras:**  
Catherine

**Chambelland**  
Denis Seurat

**Assistant Directors**  
Pascale Thirorde

**Yann Poquet**  
Romain Dubreuil

**Screenplay**  
Fabienne Gallot

**Simon Michael**  
Claude Zidi

**Dialogue**  
Didier Kaminka

**Director of Photography**  
Jean-Jacques Tarbes

**Colour**  
Eastman Colour

**Camera Operators**  
Patrice Wyers

**2nd:**  
Jean Orjollet

**Steadicam**  
Operators

**Noël Very**  
Jean-Marc Bringuier

**Editor**  
Nicole Saunier

**Art Director**  
Françoise Deleu

**Set Decorators**  
Odile Hubert

**Frédérique Menichetti**

**Special Effects**  
Philippe Silvain

**Jean-François Cousson**  
**Music**

**Francis Lai**  
**Music Director**

**Roland Romanelli**  
**Costume Design**

**Olga Pelletier**  
**Costumers**

**Yvette Bonnay**  
**Make-up Artists**

**Eric Pierre**  
**Monique Granier**

**Titles/Opticals**  
Euro-Titres

**Supervising Sound**  
**Editor**

**Amina Mazani**  
**Sound Editor**

**William Flageollet**  
**Sound Recordist**

**Jean-Louis Ughetto**  
**Sound Re-recordist**

**Michel Baruer**  
**Sound Effects**

**Jean-Marie Laforge**  
**Jacques Tassel**

**Pascal Chauvin**  
**Stunts**

**Jean-Claude Laguiez**

**Cast**  
**Philippe Noiret**

**René**  
**Thierry Lhermitte**

**François**  
**Guy Marchand**

**Inspector Felix Brissou**  
**Line Renaud**

**Simone**  
**Grace De Capitani**

**Natacha**  
**Michel Aumont**

**Commissioner Bloret**  
**Jean-Pierre Castaldi**

**Inspector Guy Portal**  
**Jean-Claude Brialy**

**Banker**  
**Jean Benguigui**

**Cesarini**  
**Christian Bouillette**

**Jeweller**  
**Roger Jendly**

**Albert Le Fourgue**  
**Georges Montillier**

**Clothing Shop**  
**Assistant**

**Ren Morard**  
**Fernand**

**Alain Mottet**  
**Superintendent**

**Bernard Freyd**  
**Guichard**

**Patricia Karim**  
**Boutique Shop**

**Assistant**  
**Jacques Richard**

**Jean-Marie Laroche**

**Antoine Valette**  
**Daniel Breton**

**Guichard's Assistants**  
**Tansou**

**Police Sergeant**  
**Daniel Milgram**

**Cop in Natacha's Bar**  
**Martial Bretter**

**Cop in Boutique**  
**Christian Pernot**

**Commissioner Le**  
**Guyaver**

**Gérard Beaume**  
**Natacha's Boss**

**Valérie Leboutte**  
**Gypsy Prostitute**

**Roland Waden**  
**Handsome Man**

**"Present"**  
**Louba Guertchikoff**

**Inspector Brissou's**  
**Mother**

**Laurentine Milebo**  
**Cook in Foyer**

**Billy Kong Lobo**  
**Natacha's Black Client**

**Bertrand de la**  
**Fontaine**

**Bistro Owner**  
**Simon Michael**

**Denis Brandon**  
**Thugs**

**Salah Cheurfi**  
**Miloud**

**Denis Seurat**  
**Record Shop Assistant**

**Raymonde Mauffroy**  
**Bank Employee**

**Marie Manten**  
**PMU Employee**

**Tadie Tuene**  
**Michel Cremades**

**9,679 feet**  
**108 minutes**

**Subtitles**

## France 1989

**Director: Claude Zidi**

Montmartre. François, an idealistic young policeman who has been initiated into the ways of corruption by his partner René, decides to go straight. René insists that no one on their patch is honest, proving his point by hauling in at random a passerby, a bank manager, and scaring from him a confession of some past wrongdoing. When the pair retrieve money stolen from a shopkeeper, René keeps half but François returns the rest to the woman, an old girlfriend of René's, who accuses the pair of stealing all the money, forcing Bloret, their superior, to institute corruption proceedings against them.

These are upheld by the crooks and businessmen of Montmartre, and the pair are suspended while Felix and Guy, two straight-arrow cops, are brought in to replace them. René and François retreat to the country, where René tries to make money fixing a horse race. The witnesses who testified against them then turn up, explaining that Felix and Guy have proved even more brutally corrupt and extortionist than they, and begging them to return. When they arrive at the Paris station, René and François are harassed by Felix and Guy, to whom they have evidently been sold out by one of the underworld figures. François apparently agrees to go into partnership with the other two, while René is left to retire.

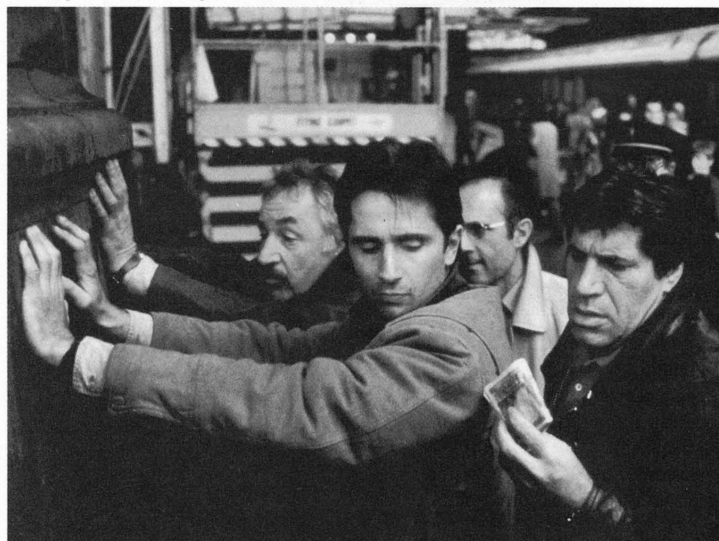
But Felix and Guy learn that François is only trying to amass evidence against them, and René and François realise that all the Montmartre hoods have sold them out. However, discovering that Felix and Guy are keeping their loot in the bank run by the man they earlier pulled in, René and François set their rivals up, stealing their money and then framing them for the bank robbery. Felix and Guy are arrested

and the police commissioner commends René and François for their honesty, promoting them to the Internal Affairs department. François tries to hand over the money Felix and Guy made, but René has already stolen it.

*Le Cop 2* finds itself in the frequent sequel bind of having to come up with a new story to build on the original, in which the central dramatic crisis – the attempts of charmingly corrupt cop Philippe Noiret to turn his unreasonably honest junior Thierry Lhermitte into a younger version of himself – was satisfactorily resolved. As with *Another 48 HRS.*, an arbitrary plot wedge has to be driven between two characters who were reconciled in the original. Here François' doomed and dramatically unconvincing attempts to go straight after having succumbed to René's blandishments are compounded by the pointless plot byway which has François deserting René for his even more crooked successors, as part (presumably) of a scheme to bring them to justice.

The business of the cheerful amorality of the central pair is rather heavily-handedly expanded by the central suggestion that absolutely nobody in Montmartre is honest or well-intentioned. The five caricature crooks all rat on the heroes at every turn, and smooth banker Jean-Claude Brialy, in a pointless cameo, turns out to be guilty of some unspecified malfeasance. The idea of charmingly corrupt cops wore pretty thin in Claude Zidi's original and is stretched well beyond breaking point here. Sentimental accordion music and nostalgic views of Paris and the French countryside spuriously try to make a distinction between the caring, twinkling, amusing rottenness of the heroes and the humourless, brutal, mean-spirited criminality of their successors.

**Kim Newman**



... Philippe Noiret, Thierry Lhermitte, Guy Marchand



# Thelma & Louise

**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
UIP  
**Production Company**  
Pathé Entertainment  
Inc  
A Percy Main  
production  
**Producers**  
Ridley Scott  
Mimi Polk  
**Co-producers**  
Dean O'Brien  
Callie Khouri  
**Production**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Christine Baer  
**Unit Production**  
**Managers**  
Dean O'Brien  
Mel Dellar  
**Location Managers**  
California:  
Michael Neale  
Utah:  
Kenneth Haber  
**Post-production**  
**Supervisor**  
Garth Thomas  
**Post-production**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Julie Payne  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Bobby Bass  
**Casting**  
Louis Di Diamo  
Extras:  
Dan Parada, The  
Casting Group  
Associate:  
Ira Belgrade  
**Assistant Directors**  
Steve Danton  
B. Scott Senechal  
Wendolyn Peterson  
2nd Unit:  
J. Tom Archuleta  
**Screenplay**  
Callie Khouri  
**Directors of**  
**Photography**  
Adrian Biddle  
Aerial:  
David B. Nowell  
Panavision  
**Colour**  
DeLuxe  
**Camera Operators**  
Alexander Witt  
Michael Scott  
Aerial:  
John A. Connell  
**Editor**  
Thom Noble  
**Production Designer**  
Norris Spencer  
**Art Director**  
Lisa Dean  
**Set Design**  
Alan Kaye  
**Set Decorator**  
Anne Ahrens  
**Picture Illustrator**  
Sherman Labby  
**Special Effects**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Stan Parks  
**Special Effects**  
Kevin S. Quibel  
Todd K. Jensen  
Tim J. Moran  
Martin J. Gibbons  
Paul Stewart  
**Music**  
Hans Zimmer  
**Guitar Solo**  
Pete Haycock  
**Music Co-ordinator**  
Blake Lewin  
**Music Supervisor**  
Kathy Nelson  
**Music Editor**  
Laura Perlman

**Songs**  
"Little Honey" by John  
Doe, David Alvin,  
performed by Kelly  
Willis; "Wild Night"  
by Van Morrison,  
performed by Martha  
Reeves; "House of  
Hope" by Toni Childs,  
David Ricketts,  
performed by Toni  
Childs; "I Don't Want  
to Love You (But I Do)"  
by Paul Kennerly,  
performed by Kelly  
Willis; "Mercury  
Blues" by Robert  
Geddins, K. C.  
Douglas, performed  
by Charlie Sexton;  
"Tennessee Plates" by  
John Hiatt, Mike  
Porter, performed by  
Charlie Sexton;  
"Badlands" by and  
performed by Charlie  
Sexton; "I Don't  
Wanna Play House" by  
Glenn Sutton, Billy  
Sherrill, performed by  
Tammy Wynette;  
"Part of You, Part of  
Me" by Glenn Frey,  
Jack Tempchin,  
performed by Glenn  
Frey; "The Way You Do  
the Things You Do" by  
William Robinson,  
Robert Rogers,  
performed by The  
Temptations; "Kick  
the Stones" by and  
performed by Chris  
Whitley; "I Can't Untie  
You from Me" by Holly  
Knight, Grayson  
Hugh, performed by  
Grayson Hugh; "No  
Lookin' Back" by  
Kenny Loggins,  
Michael McDonald, Ed  
Sanford, performed by  
Michael McDonald;  
"Drawn to the Fire" by  
Pam Tillis, Stan Webb,  
performed by Pam  
Tillis; "The Ballad of  
Lucy Jordan" by Shel  
Silverstein, performed  
by Marianne Faithfull;  
"Don't Look Back" by  
Holly Knight, Grayson  
Hugh, performed by  
Grayson Hugh; "I Can  
See Clearly Now" by  
and performed by  
Johnny Nash; "Better  
Not Look Down" by  
Joe Sample, Will  
Jennings, performed  
by B. B. King  
**Costume Design**  
Elizabeth McBride  
**Costumers**  
Key:  
Tanea Lednicki  
Set:  
Janet L. Powell  
Nisa Kellner  
**Make-up**  
Richard Arrington  
Bonita DeHaven  
**Title Design**  
Anthony Goldschmidt  
**Titles/Opticals**  
Pacific Title  
**Supervising Sound**  
**Editor**  
Jimmy Shields  
**ADR Editor**  
John Poyner  
**Sound Recordists**  
Keith A. Wester  
Music:  
Jay Rifkin  
Dolby stereo  
**Sound Re-Recordist**  
Graham Hartstone  
**Sound Effects**  
**Editor**  
Bob Risk

**Production**  
**Assistants**  
Paul Bellman  
Robin Allen  
Kami Turrou  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Bobby Bass  
**Stunts**  
Michael C. Ryan  
Kenny Endoso  
Bennie E. Moore Jnr  
Buddy Joe Hooker  
Billy Lucas  
Greg Barnett  
Tony Epper  
David Burton  
David Webster  
Steve Boyum  
Hank Hooker  
Dick Ziker  
Mary Peters  
John Meier  
Ronnie Rondell  
Anne Melville  
Norm Howell  
Terry Collis  
Bob Dewitt  
Bobby Bass  
**Stunt Doubles**  
Susan Sarandon:  
Glory Fioramonti  
Marguerite Happy  
Geena Davis:  
Diane Kay Grant  
**Stand-ins**  
Geena Davis:  
Julie Strain  
Cee Ozenne  
Susan Sarandon:  
Deborah Stenard  
**Animal Trainer**  
Grisco's Animals  
**Aerial Co-ordinator**  
Robert "Bobby Z"  
Zajonc  
**Helicopter Pilots**  
David Paris  
Don Hildebrand

**Cast**  
**Susan Sarandon**  
Louise Sawyer  
**Geena Davis**  
Thelma Dickinson  
**Harvey Keitel**  
Hal Slocombe  
**Michael Madsen**  
Jimmy  
**Christopher**  
**McDonald**  
Darryl  
**Stephen Tobolowsky**  
Max  
**Brad Pitt**  
J. D.  
**Timothy Carhart**  
Harlan  
**Lucinda Jenney**  
Lena, Waitress  
**Jason Beghe**  
State Trooper  
**Sonny Carl Davis**  
Albert  
**Ken Swofford**  
Major  
**Shelly DeSai**  
East Indian Motel  
Clerk  
**Stephen Polk**  
Surveillance Man  
**Rob Roy Fitzgerald**  
Plainclothes Cop  
**Jack Lindine**  
ID Tech  
**Michael Delman**  
Silver Bullet Dancer  
**Kristel L. Rose**  
Girl Smoker  
**Noel Walcott**  
Mountain Bike Rider  
**Marco St. John**

**11,643 feet**  
**129 minutes**

## USA 1991

**Director: Ridley Scott**

Trapped in a claustrophobic marriage to carpet salesman and giant-sized infant Darryl, Thelma Dickinson is coaxed into joining her friend Louise Sawyer, a harassed coffee-shop waitress, on a weekend spree. The trunk of Louise's car overloaded with Thelma's luggage, they set off in high spirits, stopping at a bar in Arkansas on their first evening. Thelma is picked up by bar-fly Harlan; when she rejects his advances he becomes violent, and Louise arrives in the parking lot to find her missing friend being raped. After a venomous exchange with Harlan, she pulls the gun which Thelma has packed for self-protection and shoots him dead.

The women flee, Thelma distraught and Louise shaken not just by her action but by some traumatic memory which the incident has stirred. Louise calls her boyfriend Jimmy to ask him to wire her life savings in order to fund her escape to Mexico; Thelma also calls home, to allay the anxieties of the (not too anxious) Darryl. Driving to Oklahoma City to pick up the cash, the women meet a young hitch-hiker, J.D., to whom Thelma takes a fancy. The initially reluctant Louise agrees to give him a lift into Oklahoma City, where she is surprised to find not just her money but Jimmy, who has flown in with an engagement ring.

In their respective hotel rooms, the women negotiate their relationships with their old and new partners, Thelma finding sexual awakening with J.D., who seduces her with the exotic life story of a small-time robber. But in the morning she also finds that he has run off with their money. Newly confident, she reassures the devastated Louise and proceeds to follow J.D.'s own routine, robbing a convenience store along the way. By now the police are in hot

pursuit, though detective Hal Slocombe is not unsympathetic to their plight, seemingly aware of the motive behind Louise's fatal shooting and her adamant refusal to drive through Texas (where evidently she herself was once raped).

Breaking the speed limit en route to Mexico, the women are pulled over by a state trooper, but they turn the tables on him and make off with his gun. They take revenge on a lascivious truck driver who has bothered them intermittently on their journey by blowing up his cargo of oil. Finally tracked down by the police in the Grand Canyon, the women resolve to carry on rather than surrender, and steer straight for a precipice...

This film might be subtitled "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun with Guns". From its very first scene, *Thelma & Louise* is constructed as an anthology of phallic symbolism, with cigarettes and pistols counterpointed against a ceaseless visual refrain of genito-urinary references: driving rain, crop dusting, spewing oil derricks, sundry episodes of Ridley Scott-trademark steam and, as a ubiquitous leitmotif, background figures with gushing hoses. From a screenplay by female scriptwriter Callie Khouri, Scott has fashioned a remarkably conventional morality tale about sex and drink, rock and roads.

The tone is set in the opening scenes, which serve to caricature the dull routines and unfulfilling relationships from which the women seek escape on a weekend break. Susan Sarandon, waitressing once again as in *White Palace*, admonishes a customer for smoking - "Ruins your sex drive" - before lighting up herself behind the scenes. Thelma guiltily tucks into a chocolate bar after a spat with her carpet-salesman husband (whose scarlet Corvette bears the registration "The 1", in case the preceding exchange ▶



**Outstrengthened: Brad Pitt, Geena Davis**

## Reviews

Ripoux contre ripoux  
*Thelma & Louise*



hasn't sufficiently underlined his egotism). During preparations for departure, the women's domestic interiors are lovingly examined: dark and cluttered, or at least enclosed, they offer contrast to the forthcoming 'wide open spaces'.

But – no doubt the legacy of Scott's background in advertising – these homes come across more directly as set dressers' dreams. The sorting of clothing becomes a commercials-style scrutiny of material: possessions as metaphors for personality. At first glance, this road movie-cum-chase thriller seems to applaud Thelma and Louise for their audacity, in breaking loose from their stifling life styles and then, as assaults and incidents pile up, in staying the course and keeping one step ahead of the law. But, not far beneath the shiny surface, lies a much more ambivalent, indeed covertly repressive attitude towards women who take their lives into their own hands.

The supposed freedom of the open road – hitherto an essentially masculine domain – is shown to be perilously compromised for women. In repaying male sexual abuse with a show of 'unexpected' female aggression, the heroines find themselves initially distraught, then – once they have each taken possession of a gun – empowered and exultantly defiant. But they are eventually outstrengthened by the sheer amount of weaponry which men can muster. The obligatory display of hardware – menacing helicopters, a battery of flashing blue lights, close-ups of fingers releasing safety catches – precedes a moment of tearful female bonding before the girls decide to "keep on goin'". In a scene that reprises the closing moments of *Blade Runner*, they dive over a precipice into a freeze frame (the road movie that never ends...), leaving plenty of issues suspended in mid-air.

Given the high-grade cardboard from which their characters are made, Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon get good mileage out of their roles. But, larded with product placement, the film's visual style is not as far removed from Scott's previous work as the outdoor settings might suggest. The one moment of cinematic bravura comes during the women's drive through the Painted Desert. Resisting the temptation to provide yet another package-tour panorama, Scott shoots the scene by night. With the rockfaces glowing in the background, and the heroines speeding behind an incandescent windshield, it is a brief poetic reminder that cinema exploits similar principles to tourism: *son et lumière*.

**Janet Abrams**

## Tongues Untied

### Distributor

BFI

### Production Company

MTR Productions

### Producer

Marlon T. Riggs

### Field Producers

Colin Robinson

Ron Simmons

### Associate Producer

Brian Freeman

### Screenplay

Joseph Bream

Craig Harris

Reginald Jackson

Steve Langley

Alan Miller

Donald Woods

### Director of Photography

Marlon T. Riggs

In colour

### Additional Photography

Rick Cooper

Nestor Davidson

Vivian Kleiman

Alex Langford

Calvin Roberts

Scott Sinkler

### Graphics

Robert Kinnard

### Editors

Marlon T. Riggs

On-line:

Vince Casalaina

### Music

Alex Langford

Steve Langley

Marlon T. Riggs

### Music Performed by

Saxophone:

Idris Ackamoor

Drums:

Josh Piagentini

### Songs

"Loverman"

performed by Billie

Holiday; "Black Is the

Colour of My True

Love's Hair"

performed by Nina

Simone; "First Time

Ever I Saw Your Face"

performed by Roberta

Flack; "Do You Wanna

Funk" performed by

Sylvester; "Quit Poken'

Me Mix"; "Come Out

Tonight" by Alex

Langford, Marlon T.

Riggs, performed by

Lavender Lovelights;

Blackberri, Kerrigan

Black, Gene Garth,

Arvid Williams;

"Do What You Wanna

Do" by and performed

by Steve Langley

### Poetry Performance

Essex Hemphill

### Poems

"Without Comment",

"Homocide", "In the

Life", "Conditions",

"Black Beans", "Now

We Think" by Essex

Hemphill; "Initiation"

by Reginald Jackson;

"Classified", "The

Least of My Brothers"

by Craig Harris;

"Confection", "Borrow

Things from the

Universe" by Steve

Langley; "At the Club"

by Alan Miller; "What

Do I Do About You" by

Donald Woods

### Monologues

"Black Chat", "Three

Pieces of ID", "Snap

Rap", "The Wages of

Sin" by Marlon T.

Riggs; "Brother to

Brother: Words from

the Heart" by Joseph

Beam, performed by

Larry Duckette,

Gideon Ferebee, Essex

Hemphill,

Christopher Prince

### Titles/Effects

San Francisco

Production Group

### Sound

Robert Berke Sound

### Production Assistant

Donald Woods

### With

Kerrigan Black

Blackberri

Michael Bell

Bernard Branner

Ben Callet

Gerald Davis

Kenneth R. Dixon

Larry Duckette

Darnell Stephens-

Durio

Gideon Ferebee

Brian Freeman

Gene Garth

Essex Hemphill

A. J. Honey

Paul Horrey

David Hunter

Wayson Jones

David Barron Kirkland

Richard Medford

Cornelius Moore

Bryant Navy

Willie "Ninja"

Michael Oatis

Bob Paris

Christopher Prince

Timothy Riena

Marlon T. Riggs

Ron Simmons

Taalib-Din Shakir

Robert D. Taylor

Britt Tennell

Arvid Williams

**1,980 feet**

**55 minutes**

**(16mm)**

### USA 1989

### Director: Marlon T. Riggs

● A disparate group of unidentified black gay men relate their personal experiences. Some give an account of 'Snap!thology' – the art of communicating via different snaps of the fingers. Two black men are observed kissing and caressing in a semi-darkened room. Various black voices are heard condemning homosexuality – with excerpts from Eddie Murphy's stage act. A group of black men in a restaurant discuss gay activism; a street mime by young blacks is intercut with poems about love and victimisation; a poem about HIV is voiced over a series of obituaries and photographs of black men. The chant of "brother to brother" urges black men to stand together and fight repression and prejudice.

● With an editing style that often seems to be choreographed to a rap beat, Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* takes on the complacency of whites and blacks, hetero- and homosexuals, in a bravura display of controlled anger. As well as questioning the validity of the perception of black gays by white gays – hypertrophied figures of fantasy, often enacting a kinky variation on slavery and humiliation – Riggs details the landmarks (autobiographical?) of humiliation that a black gay has to endure.

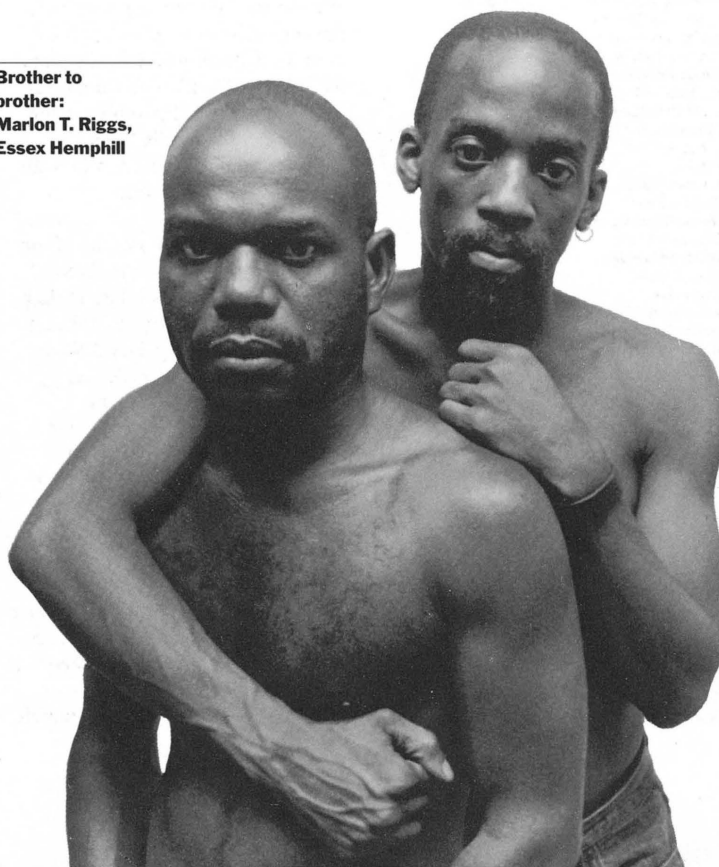
This begins with a childhood spent in the Southern state of Georgia amongst local rednecks ("motherfuckin' coon"), followed by confusion over emerging sexuality ("a punk"), and rejection by his contemporaries because of educational attainments ("Uncle Tom"). Ironically, what Riggs' modern black gay ends up confronting is the quintessential goal of the old American pioneer: to find a place of his own and establish an identity.

That all this takes place under the shadow of AIDS hardly needs to be mentioned. At the heart of the film (which has no formal narrative) is a quest for unalloyed acceptance, beginning with an urgent incantation of "brother to brother", spoken by a group of black voices over images of African, Caribbean and American blacks (the latter in that perennial Hollywood arena of ghetto life, the makeshift basketball court). The film then tries to place these blacks within the homosexual landscape of modern America.

*Tongues Untied* is rough around the edges and often inelegant in style, but it courageously points out the woeful gaps in American cinema's dealings with the black experience.

**Farrah Anwar**

**Brother to brother:**  
**Marlon T. Riggs,**  
**Essex Hemphill**





# Where Angels Fear to Tread



More views: Giovanni Guidelli, Helen Mirren

## Certificate

PG

## Distributor

Rank

## Production Company

Where Angels Fear to

Tread Ltd

For Sovereign Pictures

In association with

LWT, Stagescreen

Productions, Compact

Television

## Executive Producers

Jeffrey Taylor

Kent Walwin

LWT:

Nick Elliott

## Producer

Derek Granger

## Co-producer

Giovanna Romagnoli

## Associate Producer

Olivia Stewart

## Production

Co-ordinator

Lesley Stewart

## Production

Managers

Walter Massi

Lil Stirling

## Location Managers

Andrea Borella

Chris Harvey

## Casting

Joyce Gallie

Rita Forzano

Crowd:

Silvano Spoletini

Ettore Martini

## Assistant Directors

John Dodds

Robert Fabbri

Bojana Sutic

Michela Giorgella

UK:

Cordelia Hardy

## Screenplay

Tim Sullivan

Derek Granger

Charles Sturridge

Based on the novel by

E.M. Forster

## Director of

Photography

Michael Coulter

## Colour

Eastman Colour

## Camera Operators

Jeremy Gee

2nd Unit:

Roberto Brega

## Editor

Peter Coulson

## Production Designer

Simon Holland

## Art Directors

Italy:

Luigi Marchione

UK:

Marianne Ford

## Set Dresser

Sabina Segatori

## Draughtsman

Francesco Cagnoni

## Music

Rachel Portman

## Associate Director

David Snell

## Music Extracts

Lucia di Lammermoor

by Gaetano Donizetti,

performed by Anna

Panti, C. Toth Pal

## Music Performed by

The National

Hungarian Radio and

TV Orchestra of

Budapest

## Music

Arrangements

David Palmer

## Music Supervisor

Graham Walker

## Costume Design

Monica Howe

## Wardrobe

Supervisor

Judith Simpson

## Make-up Artists

Aileen Seaton

Heather Jones

## Title Design

Chris Allies

## Titles/Opticals

Peerless Camera Co

## Sound Editors

John Ireland

Footsteps:

Lionel Selwyn

## Sound Recordists

Peter Sutton

Hugh Strain

Music:

Chris Dibble

Dolby stereo

## Production

Assistants

Maurizio Pigna

Claudio Lucaferri

## Cast

Helena Bonham

Carter

Caroline Abbott

Judy Davis

Harriet Herriton

Rupert Graves

Philip Herriton

Giovanni Guidelli

Gino Carella

Barbara Jefford

Mrs Herriton

Helen Mirren

Lilia Herriton

Thomas Wheatley

Mr Kingcroft

Sophie Kullman

Irma

Vass Anderson

Mr Abbott

Sylvia Barter

Mrs Theobald

Eileen Davies

Ethel

Siria Betti

Hotel-keeper

Anna Lello

Perfetta

Luca Lazzareschi

Spiridione

Sergio Falasca

Giuseppe Vivenco

Carriage Drivers

Evelina Meghangli

Opera Singer

Gaetano Piro

Hooded Man

Tullio Baccellini

Postman

Lea Burroni

Clementina Sguerri

Hotel Maids

Charlie Pinsent

Girl in Café

Alessandro Casini

Gino's Baby

10,096 feet

112 minutes

## United Kingdom 1991

## Director: Charles Sturridge

The 1900s. Lilia Herriton, a widow, and her young companion Caroline Abbott leave England to visit Italy, seen off by Lilia's mother-in-law Mrs Herriton, sister-in-law Harriet and brother-in-law Philip. Soon afterwards, the Herritons receive news from Caroline that Lilia is to marry. Mrs Herriton sends Philip to the town of Monteriano to investigate; there Caroline tells him that the intended husband is Gino, the son of a local dentist. Lilia resists Philip's warning not to marry, and Gino tells Philip that he and Lilia are already married.

Philip and a distraught Caroline return to Sawston, where Caroline tells him that she feels herself to blame for encouraging Lilia to marry Gino. Lilia's marriage proves less idyllic than she had hoped; when she discovers that Gino is at once neglectful, domineering and unfaithful, she makes an impulsive but unsuccessful attempt to leave him. When Lilia dies giving birth, the Herritons attempt to hush the affair up, but Caroline hears about the child and proposes to raise it. Preferring that the baby should come into her own family, Mrs Herriton sends Philip and Harriet to fetch it from Monteriano, where they unexpectedly meet Caroline.

On a visit to the opera, Philip has a cordial encounter with Gino and his friends. Caroline visits Gino at his house and is surprised to find him lavishing paternal care on the baby. Meeting Philip in a church, she upbraids him for his lack of decisiveness. Harriet decides to steal the baby herself, but when she attempts to smuggle it out of town during a rainstorm, the Herritons' carriage collides with Caroline's and the baby is killed. When Gino finds out, he attacks Philip, but Caroline intercedes to reconcile them. Returning to England, Caroline tells Philip that she loves Gino.

Although not a product of the Merchant-Ivory team, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is so close to their staple fare that it barely establishes an identity of its own. Like *A Room with a View*, it is an E. M. Forster adaptation set in Italy, again featuring Helena Bonham Carter opposite one of those apparently interchangeable boyish male leads who form the casting backbone of the 'white flannel' school - here, Rupert Graves, who appeared in Ivory's *Maurice*. The director, Charles Sturridge, is also a predictable choice for a costume project, having cut his teeth on Granada's *Brideshead Revisited* before graduating to big-screen Waugh with *A Handful of Dust* (which also starred Graves).

Other requisite features of the Edwardian genre are duly provided: finely detailed English interiors (here the convincingly stifling Herriton sitting-room); Italian landscapes, frozen by Michael Coulter's photography into prettified picture-postcard views; and the usual array of sound character acting. Judy Davis' pinched xenophobe stands out in a strong cast, with an array of peevish mannerisms that make rather more meat out of Harriet than is provided for by Forster. Conversely, Barbara Jefford's stately venom as the meddling Mrs Herriton impresses while she is on screen, but the character is not allowed to dominate the action as much as she does in the novel, where she is a monstrously powerful representative of all that is repressive in Edwardian society.

This version, foregrounding the romantic theme, places the more obviously decorative Philip and Caroline in centre stage. But both Bonham Carter and Graves seem uneasy in their parts - Caroline remains a vague, indecisively piqued figure, while Philip comes across as more blithely dandyish, not to say camp, than Forster's stolid Italophile. Seduced by the local colour which Forster presents in an equivocal light, Sturridge highlights the picturesque at every opportunity, throwing in some gratuitous shots of gambolling urchins. Because of this emphasis on a Baedeker Italy, the novel's primary theme - English provincial mores extending a stranglehold across Europe - becomes almost a side issue.

The theme of the blinkered English abroad and the embarrassment and damage they cause is familiar from *A Room with a View*. But *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Forster's first novel) is a darker, and more problematic, variation on the theme, progressing as it does from comedy of manners to a jarringly melodramatic climax. Sturridge is unable to distinguish between the two registers, or at least to maintain Forster's wary balance between the two.

The novel ends on an ambivalent note of apparent resolution - having happily contributed to wrecking several lives, Caroline and Philip are left to their solipsistic musings. Sturridge presents an uncomplicated romantic ending, as Philip realises that he remains unloved. In the novel, this scene takes place en route for England; Sturridge stages it on that archetypal site of stiff-upper-lip sentiment, an English railway platform à la *Brief Encounter*, heightening the sentiment by association and bringing the narrative to a neatly cathartic close. A story about fine ironies and 'fine' behaviour becomes a genre exercise in fine acting and even finer linen.

**Jonathan Romney**

## Reviews

Tongues Untied  
Where Angels Fear to Tread



# Video

William Green reviews every video released this month

Mist-sodden:  
Richard Harris  
in 'The Field'



## ★ Highlights

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (MFB) and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses

## Rental

### Bird on a Wire

CIC VHA 1462

1990

*Certificate 15* Director John Badham  
Mel Gibson lends a hand to Goldie Hawn's faltering career and leads her around a busy chase caper. Even the baddies (David Carradine, Bill Duke, Stephen Tobolowsky) are boring. (MFB No. 682)

### Diamond Skulls

MCEG/Virgin VVP 883

1989

*Certificate 18* Director Nick Broomfield  
The title is the only real mystery in this uneven thriller. Gabriel Byrne is a guilt-ridden lord who has to suffer the torment of running down a woman while drunk in his Jaguar. (MFB No. 678)

### Felix the Cat: The Movie

RCA/Columbia CVT 11970

1989

*Certificate U* Director Tibor Hernádi  
In this feature-length adventure, Felix travels into another dimension, where rhinos walk on tightropes. Could Felix be on acid? (MFB No. 681)

### The Field

High Fliers HFV 9001

1990

*Certificate 15* Director Jim Sheridan  
★ A tragedy worthy of *King Lear*. The fight here is not over a kingdom but a few acres of mist-sodden land. Human greed leads to murder, misery and madness. Richard Harris, Brenda Fricker and Sean Bean head a fine Irish cast. (MFB No. 686)

### Flatliners

RCA/Columbia CVT 12461

1990

*Certificate 15* Director Joel Schumacher  
★ Peter Filardi's clever and scary script plays with the idea of the near-death experience as a clinical experiment. Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, Billy Baldwin and Kevin Bacon are the volunteers. (MFB No. 682)

### Hidden Agenda

FoxVideo 3181

1990

*Certificate 15* Director Ken Loach  
After having caused a patriotic fuss in certain sections of the British



Spice of life: Timothy Spall, Moya Brady in 'Life Is Sweet'

press, Loach's Belfast-to-Dublin thriller unfortunately fails to live up to its radical reputation. (MFB No. 684)

### An Innocent Man

Touchstone D 309102

1989

*Certificate 18* Director Peter Yates  
Nice guy Tom Selleck is framed as a drug dealer by crooked cops David Rasche and Richard Young. While in jail he plots his revenge for justice. About as complex as an episode of *The A Team*. (MFB No. 677)

### Judgment in Berlin

Warner 51697

1988

*Certificate PG* Director Leo Penn  
The events in Eastern Europe have made irrelevant many a Cold War drama, which is a pity in this case. Martin Sheen (as an American judge flown into Berlin) presides over the case of East German refugees accused of hijacking a Polish plane during their escape to the West. (MFB No. 675)

### Life Is Sweet

Palace PVC 2187R

1990

*Certificate 15* Director Mike Leigh  
★ Despite improvised dialogue, eccentric characterisation and a wayward narrative, the spectre of self-indulgence seldom troubles this sharply comic latest from Leigh. An exceptional cast of old colleagues (Alison Steadman, Jim Broadbent) and new recruits (Jane Horrocks, Claire Skinner, Timothy Spall). (MFB No. 686)

### Madhouse

20:20/NVT 12851

1990

*Certificate 15* Director Tom Ropelewski  
Kirstie Alley leads an over-animated cast through the witless tale of a

couple at war on the home front against a squad of unwanted house guests. The only good jokes concern a (repeatedly) dead cat. (MFB No. 682)

### My Blue Heaven

Warner 12003

1990

*Certificate PG* Director Herbert Ross  
Steve Martin, capable of making dazzling work of the dimmest punchline, slips into the role of an amiable big city gangster forced to assume a new identity and relocate to a small town. (MFB No. 682)

### The Rookie

Warner 120611

1990

*Certificate 18* Director Clint Eastwood  
Eastwood stars as well as directs in this formula cop movie about car thieves. The four-wheeled stunts almost save the day. (MFB No. 685)

### The Sheltering Sky

FoxVideo 2419

1990

*Certificate 18*  
Director Bernardo Bertolucci  
Bertolucci's latest epic is the story of a small American marriage lost in a big African desert. Debra Winger and John Malkovich, as the Mr and Mrs Moresby of Paul Bowles' novel, waver between intensity and pretension. (MFB No. 684)

### Texasville

Guild Home Video 8645

1990

*Certificate 15*  
Director Peter Bogdanovich  
The gathering of so many now-distinguished actors from the original *Last Picture Show* (see Retail, this month) is the only remarkable aspect of this twenty-years-on sequel. Bogdanovich's update on the boring small Texas town is embarrassingly banal. (MFB No. 684)



# Rental premiere

## American Kickboxer 1

Warner/Cannon Video 54236

USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director Franz Nel  
Producer Anant Singh Screenplay  
Emil Kolbe Lead Actors John Barrett,  
Keith Vitali, Brad Morris 88 minutes  
Karate fight feast which stirs the  
formula with some old-fashioned  
boxing. Top of the bill are John  
Barrett and black-belt Keith Vitali.

## Any Man's Death

Braveworld BRV 10068

USA 1989

*Certificate 15* Director Tom Clegg  
Producers John Karie, S. D. Nethersole  
Screenplay Iain Roy, Chris Kelly  
Lead Actors John Savage, William  
Hickey, Ernest Borgnine, Mia Sara  
104 minutes  
While on assignment in the Angolan  
bush, journalist Leon Abrams  
(John Savage) encounters Dr Bauer  
(William Hickey): biochemist, Nazi  
war criminal and a true son of Israel.  
Meaningful but muddled.

## Back Street Dreams

First Independent VA 20124

USA 1990

*Certificate 18* Director Rupert Hitzig  
Producers Jason O'Malley, Lance H.  
Robbins Screenplay Jason O'Malley  
Lead Actors Jason O'Malley, Brooke  
Shields, Sherilyn Fenn  
In between looking after his autistic  
child and sharing the affections of  
girlfriends Sherilyn Fenn and Brooke  
Shields, Jason O'Malley is to be found  
roaming the streets looking for a  
fight. Not a patch on Sylvester  
Stallone.

## Blind Vengeance

CIC VHA 1485

USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director Lee Philips  
Producer Albert J Salzer Screenplay  
Henry Simoun, Curt Allen Lead Actors  
Gerald McRaney, Lane Smith, Don  
Hood, Richard Lineback 88 minutes  
Tiresome rehash of elements of  
Missing and Mississippi Burning.  
A bereaved father plots vengeance  
on the racist bigots who murdered  
his civil-rights-campaigning son.

## Blood Moon

Capital CHV 1004

Australia 1990

*Certificate 18* Director Alec Mills  
Producer Stanley O'Toole Screenplay  
Robert Brennan Lead Actors Leon

Lissek, Christine Amor, Ian Williams,  
Helen Thomson 96 minutes  
Girls at a boarding school have to  
deal with murder. Hard to believe  
that the killer could be the mad nun  
spotted at the crime scene.

## Blood River

FoxVideo 2990

USA 1990

*Certificate PG* Director Mel Damski  
Producer Andrew Gottlieb Screenplay  
John Carpenter Lead Actors Wilford  
Brimley, Ricky Schroder 88 minutes  
An overactive Western where no  
encounter is too implausible for  
Ricky Schroder - Indians, mountain  
men, black-hatted gamblers, saloon  
sirens and vengeful posers.

## Cast the First Stone

Odyssey ODY 194

USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director John Korty  
Producer Mark Burley Screenplay Brian  
Ross Lead Actors Jill Eikenberry,  
Richard Masur, Joe Spano 90 minutes  
Competent made-for-TV conscience-  
jogger, which dramatises the ordeal  
of Diane Martin, an unmarried  
Catholic schoolteacher who elected  
to keep the child she conceived  
during a rape.

## China White

VPD VPD453

Hong Kong 1990

*Certificate 18* Director Ronny Yu  
Producer Jim Choi Screenplay  
F. W. Silleroy, Victor Hon Lead Actors  
Billy Drago, Russell Wong, Lisa  
Schrage 99 minutes  
★ A drugs and detectives action  
thriller set in the Amsterdam  
underworld. The action is fast and  
the plotting inventive as the Chinese  
warlords battle it out with the Mafia  
drug barons.

## Dark Side of the Moon

Medusa MO 245

USA 1989

*Certificate 18* Director D. J. Webster  
Producers Keith Walley, Paul White  
Screenplay Carey W. Hayes, Chad Hayes  
Lead Actors Will Bledsoe, Alan  
Blumenfield, John Diehl 87 minutes  
Breathtaking silliness as a space crew  
discovers that the space shuttles  
Discovery and Venus and every vessel  
lost in the Bermuda Triangle have  
landed on the Moon.

## Flesh Gordon 2

EV EVV 1192

USA 1990

*Certificate 18* Director Howard Ziehm  
Producer Maurice Smith Screenplay  
Doug Frisby, Howard Ziehm  
Lead Actors Vince Murdocco,  
Robyn Kelly, Tony Travis

Howard Ziehm took nearly twenty  
years to gather enough smutty jokes  
for a sequel to his original film. The  
toilet humour has gained neither in  
maturity nor in subtlety.

## Framed

Warner 25010

USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director Dean Parisot  
Producer Elaine H. Sperber Screenplay  
Gary Rosen Lead Actors Jeff Goldblum,  
Kristin Scott-Thomas, Tod Graff  
88 minutes  
An unexceptional comedy about  
artwork forgery is given depth and  
texture by Jeff Goldblum's likeable  
acting style. Goldblum plays a  
penniless painter whose talent for  
turning out fakes attracts the  
unreliable affections of Kristin  
Scott-Thomas.

## Ghost Dad

CIC VHA 1469

USA 1990

*Certificate PG* Director Sidney Poitier  
Producer Terry Nelson Screenplay Chris  
Reese, Brent Maddock, S.S. Wilson  
Lead Actors Bill Cosby, Kimberly  
Russell, Denise Nicholas, Ian Bannen,  
Barry Corbin 80 minutes  
Bill Cosby plays a recently deceased  
father who sticks around to see his  
family right. It is hard to picture the  
distinguished Sidney Poitier even  
reading this kind of script - let alone  
directing it.

## Hired to Kill

CIC VHB 2499

USA 1990

*Certificate 18* Directors Nico  
Mastorakis, Philip Rader Producer  
Nico Mastorakis Lead Actors Brian  
Thompson, Oliver Reed, George  
Kennedy, José Ferrer 93 minutes  
The macho conventions of the action  
movie are mowed down without  
mercy in an entertaining gunbustler.  
Brian Thompson leads a right-wing  
plot to overthrow a tinpot island  
dictator - his shadowy employers  
disguise him as an effete dress  
designer and give him a hit squad of  
seven women mercenaries  
masquerading as fashion models.

## Jezebel's Kiss

SGE Home Video 1005

USA 1990

*Certificate 18* Director Harvey Keith  
Producer Seth M. Wilenson Lead Actors  
Malcolm McDowell, Meg Foster,  
Katherine Berrese, Meredith Baxter-  
Birney, Everett McGill 98 minutes  
The guilty secret disturbing the tide  
of life in a California seaside town  
takes so long to come out that  
experienced actors Meg Foster and  
Malcolm McDowell find it difficult to  
disguise their boredom.

## The Last to Go

ITC 9126

USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director John Erman  
Producer Freyda Rothstein Screenplay  
William Hanley Lead Actors Terry  
O'Quinn, Tyne Daly, Annabeth Gish  
91 minutes  
★ Tyne Daly (of Cagney & Lacey),  
poleaxed by the desertion of her  
husband after twenty years and the  
departure of her grown-up children,  
has to learn how to build a new life  
out of the wreckage. A weepie of  
rare intelligence.

## Lethal Charm

ITC 8047

USA 1990

*Certificate PG* Director Richard  
Michaels Producers Freyda Rothstein,  
Lois Luger Screenplay Janice Hickey  
Lead Actors Heather Locklear, Barbara  
Eden, Stuart Wilson 92 minutes  
Glossy, self-satisfied remake of  
All About Eve, set in the world  
of broadcasting and looking more  
like an episode of Dynasty.

## May Wine

Touchstone D540862

USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director Carol Wiseman  
Producer Monique Annaud Screenplay  
Peter Lefcourt, Carol Wiseman  
Lead Actors Joanna Cassidy, Guy  
Marchand, Lara Flynn Boyle,  
Paul Freeman 80 minutes  
Guy Marchand, a French  
gynaecologist incredibly called  
Dr Charmant, meets and seduces  
mother Joanna Cassidy and daughter  
Lara Flynn Boyle within hours of  
their arrival in Paris.

## Sarah, Plain and Tall

Palace PVC 2195R

USA 1990

*Certificate PG* Director/Producer Glenn  
Jordan Executive Producer Glenn Close  
Screenplay Patricia MacLachlan, Carol  
Sobieski Lead Actors Glenn Close,  
Christopher Walken, Lexi Randall  
98 minutes  
In farming country Kansas,  
widower Christopher Walken  
and housekeeper Glenn Close  
make up their minds to marry,  
but the straw hats, cute brats and  
self-righteousness are all  
insufferable.

## Side Out

RCA/Columbia CVT 12458

USA 1991

*Certificate 15* Director Peter Israelson  
Producer Gary Foster Screenplay David  
Thoreau Lead Actors C. Thomas  
Howell, Peter Horton, Harley Jane  
Kozak 100 minutes  
A plot set around beach volleyball,



apparently a respected game in California. Director Peter Israelson's previous credits include commercials for Coca Cola and McDonald's. Enough said.

#### To Be the Best

Odyssey ODY 196  
UK 1991

*Certificate 15* Director Tony Wharmby  
Producer Aida Young Screenplay Elliott Baker, based on the novel by Barbara Taylor Bradford *Lead Actors* Lindsay Wagner, Anthony Hopkins, Stephanie Beacham, Christopher Cazenove  
186 minutes

Lindsay Wagner and Stephanie Beacham smothered in sapphires fight it out. Anthony Hopkins languidly compares his expensive wardrobe with that of Christopher Cazenove.

#### Too Much Sun

First Independent/First View  
VA 20127  
USA 1990

*Certificate 18* Director Robert Downey  
Producer Lisa Hansen Screenplay Al Schwartz, Laura Ernst, Robert Downey *Lead Actors* Robert Downey Jr, Eric Idle, Ralph Macchio, Laura Ernst 94 minutes

★ Underground director Robert Downey, author of *Two Tons of Turquoise* and *Taos Tonight*, has resurfaced – but he is still way off the mainstream. A millionaire's will makes inheritance of his fortune conditional upon his son or daughter (who are both gay) begetting some kind of legitimate offspring. The farce is uneven, but mostly hilarious.

#### Web of Deceit

CIC VHB 2500  
USA 1990

*Certificate 15* Director Sandor Stern  
*Lead Actors* Linda Purl, Paul De Souza, James Read, Ray McKinnon, Linda Pierce 89 minutes

★ Unusually fine-spun courtroom drama, with Linda Purl as the attorney who is put to the test by handsome state prosecutor James Read. The case involves a young mechanic, framed for the murder of a pretty girl in the garden of a local Atlanta big-wig.

## Retail

#### Aardman Animations – Volume 1

Connoisseur CR 031  
UK 1983-1989 Price £12.99

*Certificate PG* Directors Richard Goleszowski, Barry Purves, Peter Lord, David Sproxton, Stephen Johnson, Nick Park 45 minutes



Grim tale: 'Street of Crocodiles'

★ Specialists in plasticine, the Aardman team are well known on TV for children's series (*Adventures of Morph*), pop videos (Peter Gabriel's *Sledgehammer*) and commercials (Heat Electric). This collection includes *Creature Comforts* (a satire on zoos which won them a deserved Oscar), the Shakespeare puppet piece *Next* and a feline version of Nina Simone's 'My Baby Just Cares for Me'.

#### Animation On 4 – Volume 1

Connoisseur CR 033  
UK 1983-1990 Price £12.99

*Certificate 15* Directors Barry Purves, Erica Russell, Derek Hayes, Phil Austin, Peter Lord, David Sproxton, Joanna Quinn, David Anderson, Alison de Vere 59 minutes

★ A lively selection of Channel 4 commissioned animated shorts, which kicks off with *Next* (see above), and then moves into graphics, comic strip, sound collage and something called xerography.

#### Apu Trilogy: Pather Panchali, Aparajito (The Unvanquished), Apur Sansar (The World of Apu)

Connoisseur, 3 tapes:  
CR 027, 028, 029  
India 1955, 1956, 1959  
Price £14.99 each

*Certificate U* Director Satyajit Ray  
★ This early Ray trilogy, adapted from the novels of Bibhutibhusan Banerji, is about the life of Apu as he grows from early boyhood in a small Bengal village to suffering manhood in Calcutta. *B/W Subtitles* (MFB No. 289 *Pather Panchali*, No. 290 *Aparajito*, No. 328 *Apur Sansar*)

#### The Brothers Quay – Volume 1

Connoisseur CR 032  
UK 1984-1986 Price £12.99

*Certificate PG* Directors Brothers Quay 45 minutes  
★ American twins Steve and Tim Quay move their grim, fantastical puppets through three shorts – *The*

*Cabinet of Jan Švankmajer* (a tribute to the Czech surrealist), *Street of Crocodiles* (based on the story by Bruno Schulz) and *This Unnameable Broom*. (MFB No. 629)

#### A Canterbury Tale

Connoisseur CR 034  
UK 1944 Price £14.99

*Certificate U* Directors Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger

★ Pressed into propaganda service, Powell and Pressburger's imagination turned in ever more eccentric circles – a homesick GI, a plucky land girl, a frustrated cinema organist, and a magistrate who smears glue on women's hair in the blackout. By turns quaint, nonsensical, startling and ridiculous, but also rather splendid. *B/W* (MFB Nos. 126 and 610)

#### Cat's Eye

Warner/Cannon PES 511506  
USA 1984 Price £10.20

*Certificate 15* Director Lewis Teague  
Three second-string Stephen King stories linked by a cat. With James Woods, Kenneth MacMillan and Drew Barrymore. (MFB No. 618)

#### The Dead Zone

Warner/Cannon PES 54260  
USA 1983 Price £10.20

*Certificate 15*  
Director David Cronenberg  
Able to see into the future after coming out of a coma, Christopher Walken tries to stop madman Martin Sheen from becoming President and unleashing the holocaust. Based on a Stephen King novel, this was Cronenberg's first big-budget film. (MFB No. 604)

#### The Delta Force

Warner/Cannon PES 54259  
USA 1986 Price £10.20

*Certificate 18* Director Menahem Golan  
Chuck Norris and Lee Marvin disgrace themselves by leading a shoot-to-kill American strike squad to rescue a planeload of kidnapped civilians from terrorists. (MFB No. 627)

#### Firewalker

Warner/Cannon PES 52285  
USA 1986 Price £10.20

*Certificate 18* Director J. Lee Thompson  
Mercenary Chuck Norris goes in search of lost treasure in a Guatemalan gold mine. Lamentable, charmless parody of the Indiana Jones adventures. (MFB No. 641)

#### Hamlet

RCA/Columbia CVR 20256  
UK 1969 Price £10.99

*Certificate U* Director Tony Richardson

★ Richardson's low-budget film version spilled the play off the stage but kept within the dark, brick-walled limits of the Roundhouse Theatre. Nicol Williamson's intense performance dominates the scene and Anthony Hopkins, Judy Parfitt, Gordon Jackson and Marianne Faithfull flit in and out of the shadows. (MFB No. 436)

#### Heathers

RCA/Columbia CVR 21971  
USA 1988 Price £10.99

*Certificate 18*  
Director Michael Lehmann  
★ Unblushingly satirising 'sensitive' issues like playground victimisation and teenage suicide, Lehmann's first feature sets out to be the ultimate high-school film. Fresh-faced Winona Ryder moves from preppie teenager to gleeful murderer with comic delight. (MFB No. 672)

#### Hopscotch

Castle CAS 5157  
USA 1980 Price £7.99

*Certificate PG* Director Ronald Neame  
Disgruntled CIA operative Walter Matthau goes on the run, and sets about publishing embarrassing instalments of his *Spycatcher*-style autobiography. This was a second attempt (after *House Calls*) to cast Glenda Jackson as Matthau's comic partner – without much success. (MFB No. 563)

#### Hunchback of Notre Dame

RCA/Columbia CVR 20412  
USA 1982

*Certificate PG* Director Michael Tuchner  
Producer Norman Rosemont  
Screenplay John Gay, from the novel by Victor Hugo *Lead Actors* Anthony Hopkins, Derek Jacobi, Lesley Anne Down, John Gielgud 97 minutes  
Anthony Hopkins as the unconvincing hunchback. The Paris streets are packed with well-spoken British actors – which may seem improbable to us, but is exactly what American TV audiences (for whom this was made) seem to expect from a literary classic.

#### I Know Where I'm Going!

Connoisseur CR 035  
UK 1945 Price £14.99

*Certificate U* Directors Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger  
The most escapist of The Archers' wartime fantasies. Wendy Hiller, on her way to marry a millionaire, is detained by a storm on a Hebridean island with the local impoverished lad (Roger Livesey), who charms her with his country ways. The brittle, mannered dialogue has dated, but the oddity of it all remains intact. *B/W* (MFB Nos. 144 and 609)



### John Le Carré Trilogy

BBC Video, 3 double-pack tapes 4605, 4606, 4607

### Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy

UK 1979 Price £19.99

Certificate PG Director John Irvin  
Producer Jonathan Powell Teleplay  
Arthur Hopcraft, from the novel  
by John Le Carré Lead Actors Alec  
Guinness, Joss Ackland, Michael  
Aldridge, Ian Bannen, Anthony Bate  
288 minutes

### Smiley's People

UK 1982 Price £19.99

Certificate 15 Director Simon Langton  
Producer Jonathan Powell Teleplay  
John Hopkins, from the novel by  
John Le Carré Lead Actors Alec  
Guinness, Mario Adorf, Eileen Atkins,  
Anthony Bate 338 minutes

### A Perfect Spy

UK 1989 Price £19.99

Certificate 15 Director Peter Smith  
Producer Colin Rogers Teleplay Arthur  
Hopcraft, from the novel by John  
Le Carré Lead Actors Peter Egan, Ray  
McAnally, Rudiger Weigang, Peggy  
Ashcroft 374 minutes



Perfect defence: Peter Egan

★ These three handsome BBC serials provide over sixteen compelling hours of evidence for the defence of public broadcasting values. A *Perfect Spy* was made ten years on from the classic *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, but concedes nothing to its seniors in the way of knotty plotting, brooding atmosphere and lost empire melancholy. In the shady character of Magnus Pym's father Rick (Ray McAnally) it offers riches and colour that mock the reticent manners of George Smiley and his Oxford friends.

### King and Country

Connoisseur CR 036

UK 1964 Price £14.99

Certificate PG Director Joseph Losey  
Based directly on John Wilson's play  
*Hamp*, Losey's claustrophobic court-  
martial drama looks at class conflict  
and sexual repression in the strained  
relationship between officer Dirk  
Bogarde and squaddie Tom  
Courtenay. B/W (MFB No. 371)

### King Lear

RCA/Columbia CVR 20374

UK/Denmark 1970 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Peter Brook  
Recreating their Stratford stage  
production for film, Brook and Paul

Scofield try to capture something of  
the same stormy passion in wintry  
Jutland. With Irene Worth, Cyril  
Cusack, Patrick Magee and Alan  
Webb. (MFB No. 452)

### Last Exit to Brooklyn

(Letzte Ausfahrt Brooklyn)

Polygram GLD 51002

West Germany 1989 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Ulrich Edel  
★ Hard times in post-war Brooklyn  
are remembered without sentiment  
in a rough-hewn adaptation of  
Hubert Selby's notorious novel. Edel  
is unsqueamish about depicting the  
violence, but his aim is sympathy  
rather than sensationalism. Jennifer  
Jason-Leigh, Burt Young and Jerry  
Orbach suffer together. (MFB No. 672)

### The Last Picture Show

RCA/Columbia CVR 12977

USA 1971 Price £10.99

Certificate 15  
Director Peter Bogdanovich  
★ Low-budget prequel to *Texasville*  
(see Rental, this month), and still in  
quite another class. Full of references  
to Ford, Hawks and Orson Welles, the  
work won (a short-lived) auteur status  
for ex-critic Bogdanovich. Starring  
Ben Johnson, Cloris Leachman  
(Supporting Actor Oscar winners),  
Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges and  
Cybill Shepherd. B/W (MFB No. 459)

### Machbeth

RCA/Columbia CVR 20668

USA 1971 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Roman Polanski  
★ Adapting the tragedy for his own  
purposes, Polanski twists the knife  
with sharp intelligence, without ever  
pretending to scholarship or subtlety.  
Casting Jon Finch and Francesca  
Annis as the two terrorists, he goes for  
the jugular of the play. (MFB No. 458)

### A Man for All Seasons

RCA/Columbia CVR 30013

UK 1966 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Fred Zinnemann  
Zinnemann knows how to  
manipulate Robert Bolt's complex  
script and place his sets, costumes  
and lesser roles to set off the faultless  
central performance of Paul Scofield.  
(MFB No. 400)

### Manhunter

FoxVideo 5048

USA 1986 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Michael Mann  
★ Before Anthony Hopkins played  
Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the  
Lambs*, British actor Brian Cox got his  
teeth into the part. This grisly  
thriller is a faithful adaptation of the  
Thomas Harris novel *Red Dragon*, in  
which Lecter was first introduced.

Investigator William Petersen has to  
seek the captive psychiatrist's help in  
tracking down a serial killer called  
"The Tooth Fairy". (MFB No. 661)

### Predator

FoxVideo 1515

USA 1987 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director John McTiernan  
Middleweight Arnold  
Schwarzenegger vehicle set in the  
jungle. Efforts to beef up the  
monster-in-the-shrubbery script  
with Vietnam echoes and the CIA  
are entirely predictable.  
(MFB No. 648)

### Red Sonja

Warner PES 52038

USA 1985 Price £10.20

Certificate 15  
Director Richard Fleischer  
Brigitte Nielsen with Arnold  
Schwarzenegger on a mission of  
vengeance against evil Queen Gedren  
(Sandahl Bergman). A stolen  
talisman, a giant and his lizard-men,  
a crumbling castle and a vow of  
chastity all stand in the way of the  
inevitable outcome. (MFB No. 622)

### Salaam Bombay!

Connoisseur CR 030

India 1988 Price £14.99

Certificate 15 Director Mira Nair  
★ A documentarist by training, Mira  
Nair's first film is set in the slums of  
Bombay using real street children as  
actors. A sad drama of poverty, petty  
crime and exploitation. (MFB No. 661)

### Silver Bullet

Warner PES 54261

USA 1985 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Daniel Attias  
There is little worth watching in this  
moth-eaten exhibition of small town  
lycanthropy. Everett McGill plays the  
werewolf. (MFB No. 630)



Sweet sixteen (Chanda Sharma) in 'Salaam Bombay!'

### The Taming of the Shrew

RCA/Columbia CVR 20015

USA/Italy 1966 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Franco Zeffirelli  
The Italian director's very first film  
encounter with Shakespeare.  
Apparently encouraged by the  
tempestuous personal relations of his  
stars Richard Burton and Elizabeth  
Taylor, Zeffirelli plays the comedy as  
half shouting match, half fisticuff  
farce. (MFB No. 399)

### Turn of the Tide/The Man at the Gate

Connoisseur CR037

UK 1935 & 1940 Price £14.99

Certificate U Director Norman Walker  
A worthy adaptation of Leo  
Walmsley's *Three Fevers*, following life  
in a little Yorkshire fishing  
community. Norman Walker's  
careful, anthropological approach  
(repeated in the later Cornish coaster  
*The Man at the Gate*) has its admirers,  
but modern audiences may chafe at  
his self-effacing style and slow pace.  
B/W (MFB No. 85 *The Man at the Gate*)

### Wild Geese II

Warner/Cannon PES 52292

UK 1985 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Peter Hunt  
Scott Glenn and Edward Fox in  
commando berets. Their mission is  
to spring Rudolf Hess from Spandau  
for a world-scoop press conference.  
(MFB No. 616)

### Year of the Dragon

Warner/MGM/UA PES 50713

USA 1985 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Michael Cimino  
After the debacle of *Heaven's Gate*,  
Cimino vents his considerable  
frustrations on New York's  
Chinatown. Renegade racist cop  
Mickey Rourke tears up the rule book  
and opens fire. (MFB No. 624)



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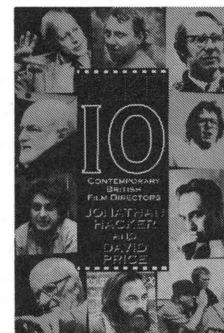
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## Montage

From Peter Cox

I would like to take issue with John Berger's article 'Every Time We Say Goodbye' (June 1991).

Berger acknowledges that he "seems to be saying", eighty years after Griffith and Eisenstein, that the secret of the Seventh Art is editing. However, he then portrays editing as merely "a shuttle service between different places and times".

For Eisenstein, the principle of montage was much more profound than that. In fact, it was qualitatively different. He always insisted that montage was "not an idea composed of successive shots stuck together but an idea that derives from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another". (*Eisenstein Writings 1922-1934*, BFI Books, 1988.)

He goes on to show how the juxtaposition of two shots "explodes" into something else, a concept, which is not present in either shot separately but only in their unity.

An example given by Eisenstein in 1929, in an analogy with Japanese hieroglyphs, was "Eye + Water = Crying". The concept of crying or weeping is not present either in the 'shot' of an eye or the 'shots' of water, but only exists when the two 'shots' are brought together.

In the hands of a great film-maker, like some of those in Berger's list, the application of this principle can move an audience deeply. Consequently for Berger to state that cinema "doesn't have to lament, it can show tears" is to stand this principle of Eisenstein's on its head.

Again and again in his early writings, Eisenstein makes a fierce polemic against the dogmatic influence of the other artistic and dramatic forms which seek always to 'show tears' instead of inducing emotions in the audience through montage.

In fact this conflict is still going on today, and the cinema will continue artistically to have its hands tied behind its back if its leading theoreticians propagate and employ such alien methodology.

Twickenham, Middlesex

## Breaking with silence

From Howard Feinstein

According to my former colleague Amy Taubin - I was her editor at *Village Voice* - Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* is a "profoundly feminist movie"

which "takes a familiar narrative and shakes up the gender and sexuality stuff", and Clarice (Jodie Foster) is "the pursuer rather than the pursued" (May 1991).

Somehow, though, the pursued, Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine), got lost in the shaking. He is a classical deviant, ripe for a homophobic audience. Pierced nipple, poodle, penis tucked away between his legs - these are highly charged signifiers that, as far as I can remember, are not present in the novel. Like the shriek "Mary", they are cheap, sensationalised representations. This is a progressive text?

I also think she misses the point of the film's final scene, when Lecter "[saunters] down a crowded street in Haiti - the serial killer, an American gift to the third world, a fragmentation bomb, ready to explode". Lecter is clearly there to dine on the dreaded bureaucrat who was in charge of his incarceration back in the US. When Lecter phones Clarice from Haiti to tell her of his plan, we see the potential victim passing by. The Haitians and their homeland are barely in evidence; in conventional Hollywood style, the local inhabitants and the landscape are pure backdrop, totally irrelevant to the scene. Is it possible that the powers behind the film wrote in this scene to justify a Caribbean jaunt? Demme once made a documentary on Haiti. Here he gives it mere lip service.

New York

## Englishness

From Alison Light

Cairns Craig's peevish analysis of 'Filming Forster' (June 1991) cries out to be contradicted on many counts but in the first place because its historical inaccuracies about Forster's work obscure the ways in which English liberalism rather than a version of Thatchersim might be said to lie at the heart of the Merchant/Ivory films and their project. Far from dwelling in the secure world of the "last great age of the English *haute bourgeoisie*", Forster's middle classes are always divided and uncertain, unable to maintain their values because sexual desires in particular, across class and nationality, keep getting in the way.

Far from being "silenced" by the First World War, Forster's *Passage to India*, written ten years later, was clearly a response to it, continuing his interrogation of Englishness. Forster carried on as a thinking and writing liberal throughout the decades to come (one who would rather, as he wrote, hope to betray his country than his friend). Nor was he writing "before the modernist experiment" - Conrad?

*Portrait of the Artist*? Eliot and Pound? In fact his depiction of Englishness is best understood as deliberately locating itself in relation to international modernism: *Passage to India* ends with an ironic reminder of *Ulysses* as Forster signs off "Weybridge, England", in answer to Joyce's "Trieste-Zurich-Paris".

In trying to address a mainstream English audience within mainstream narrative conventions, Forster wanted to challenge his own kind from inside a sympathetic understanding of majority prejudices and sentiments. This is a commitment, and a limitation, the Merchant/Ivory films share.

What the films have picked up on is the romantic longing within liberalism for making unions despite differences of nationality, sexuality, social class - and it is as romances that they might best be understood, criticised, and (dare I say it?) enjoyed. Craig loftily accuses Forster's "only connect" of being a trite response to a deeply inhibited middle-class society. But it wasn't just the middle classes who couldn't communicate with their fellows or whose insular attitudes underpinned imperialism.

Whether we see Forster's gesture towards solidarity as hopeless wishful thinking or as part of the faith in a common humanity with others which gets us through the darkest political night, it is worthy of a more respectful and complex historical analysis than Craig's. The Anglo-Indian history of the Merchant/Ivory company, and its own relation to Englishness - which Craig conveniently ignores - is also more than relevant.

Certain film school orthodoxies of the 70s have a lot to answer for, not least in their killjoy dismissal of the viewer as the simple dupe of bourgeois ideology. Something of this lurks in Craig's puritanical anxiety about cinema's "vicarious pleasures". A very different analysis of the films would have emerged if it had concentrated on the representation of sexuality rather than merely reducing all discussion to a uniform and mechanical notion of class and consumption. It would still have been dissatisfied with the films but it would have been a lot less lordly towards their audiences. And it might have suggested that we should read the return to Edwardian England in the 80s as much as a rejection of Thatcherism and its ethics as a crude reflection of it.

London E1

● The debate about Englishness will continue in future issues with articles on the British horror movie, *Young Soul Rebels*, and David Lean.



Jodie Foster: pursuer or pursued?



How do you market reality? Benjamin Woolley reports how it is done

# Lifting the veil

Dr Jonathan Waldern is a scriptwriter's idea of what a technological entrepreneur should be. He is short, sharp and flashes a smile so bright it could tan you. He even looks a little like Mel Gibson.

People like that do not usually carry PhDs, nor do they have a claim to pioneering new technologies. Dr Waldern, however, has both. Earlier in the year his company, W Industries, launched the Virtuality system to the world's press and arcade equipment suppliers – as motley a collection of people as you could gather in one place. It was, Waldern claimed, "the world's first leisure virtual reality system".

## Lured

Virtuality is an arcade game. Players sit in fibre-glass armchairs and don Visette virtual reality helmets, which have for eye pieces tiny TV sets showing a stereoscopic picture of a computer-generated scene. These immerse the players in an artificial world – in the case of the demonstration, a Harrier jump jet sortie – through which they navigate by manipulating joysticks.

So convincing is this world, claims Dr Waldern, that W Industries research staff who

have spent the day within it are advised not to drive for at least an hour. At the Virtuality launch, as at every virtual reality event, some credulous journalist (or a planted PR executive) asked whether players might become so accustomed to the artificial world of Virtuality that they might forget the risks of the real one. No danger. It is not virtual reality that threatens to deprive people of their sense of reality, it is marketing.

The Virtuality launch was itself a convincing demonstration of immersion. All sensory communication with the outside world was effectively jammed by flashing lights, pulsating music and enough dry ice to trigger a fog alert. It was only too easy to imagine we had entered another world.

But there was little risk of mistaking it for the real one. Yet that is what we are assumed to do whenever confronted with other forms of fiction. Some are safe – books, for example, and even theatre, which politely requests its audience to suspend its disbelief. But cinema is quite different. In the dislocating darkness of the cinema, we are lured into another world. All you see is the big, bright screen. All you

hear is the Dolby stereo soundscape. All you taste is popcorn. And television has made the process of commuting between reality and fantasy so habitual that we no longer even need to dim the lights.

## No exit

Virtual reality is offered as the culmination of this inexorable flight from reality. With cinema, the experience of watching the film remains pretty distant from the experience the film depicts. Virtual reality brings the two together. Viewer becomes participant. The veil of representation is lifted.

Except that virtual reality is not a fiction. Fictional worlds are navigated by means of narrative, not joysticks. Virtual reality has no story to give it meaning. It is a game; you have to make it up as you go along.

The fiction is the rhetoric that technology will propel us into the land of our dreams. Disneyworld has got us part way there. Computers will take you all the way. It is a compelling fiction. Closing our eyes and believing we can fly didn't work, but maybe this neat helmet could do the trick.

## Professor Potemkin's competition

There was an excellent response to our recent Casting Coup competition, which was prompted by the recent pairing of Val Kilmer and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer above the title of a film called 'Kill Me Again'. Readers' best suggestions so far are: Roy and Ginger Rogers in 'Horse Feathers'; Nastassja and Klaus Kinski in 'La Belle et la bête', and for music lovers, Robert Wagner and Barbara Bach in 'The Orchestra Rehearsal'. The honours nearly went to India Harvey of Acton for her inspirational plan to remake 'The Odd Couple' with Willie and Billie Whitelaw.

Happily, I am empowered this month to reveal the winner of our first Missing Mugs contest (Sight and Sound No. 1). The moisturised motorists on the Holy Island causeway were (of course) Lionel Stander, Françoise Dorleac and Donald Pleasance, in Polanski's 'Cul-de-Sac'. Several of you volunteered the name of the actor who was hidden in the car (it was Jack



MacGowran), but it didn't do you any good. The coveted trophy (a copy of Jean-Luc Godard's 'Weekend') goes to Pete Tate of Leicester, who stuck to the facts and offered this pertinent line of dialogue – "Well, Mr Branson, with Channel 4 sponsoring the crossing, what did you expect?"

Disappointed buffs can turn their attention to this month's fragment of faded glory. Once again, you are asked to help the National Film Archive's hard-pressed restorers by naming the actors. A single line of witty dialogue should be submitted, in case of a tie-break. The winner gets a videocassette copy of Victor Halperin's classic, 'White Zombie'.

Entries by postcard or fax to Professor Potemkin at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (Fax: 071-436 2327) by 15 July. Hurry to avoid disappointment.

(Professor Potemkin is a Senior Lecturer in Cinema Studies at Fitzrovia Film Foundation.)





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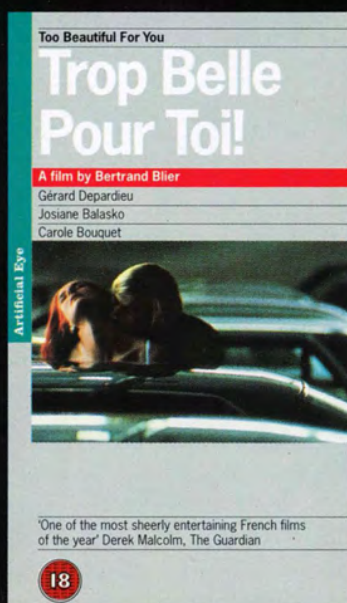
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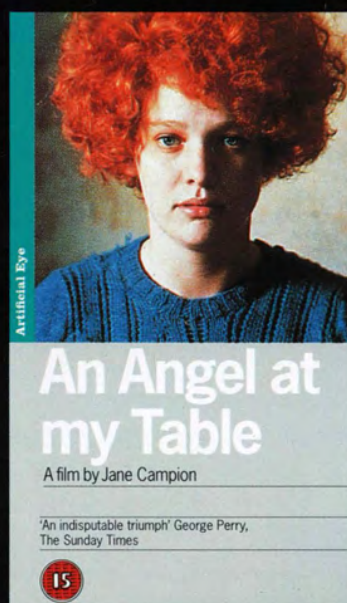
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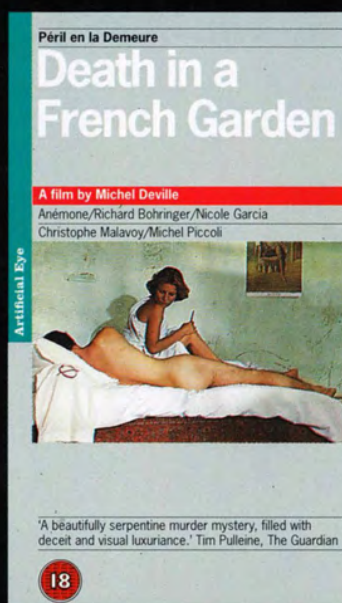
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